

Contract Management Optimization



A Common Legal Department Challenge, an Uncommon Solution



While the legal department at Ferring Pharmaceuticals had established an innovative, self-service approach to its commercial contracting process, there were definite opportunities to optimize it across critical business areas. Sheila Dusseau, head of Global CLO Operations and Innovation, and her team of lawyers and legal operations professionals, worked to identify several areas for improvement: turnaround time, time zone coverage, and better alignment of its legal review processes with the existing self-service model.

Addressing these common issues, including the need to refocus its attorneys from lower complexity contracts to more strategic ones, was a priority for Dusseau — as was identifying the right outside partner. When asked what made Ferring's methods different, she noted three specific things, the team's approach to change management with a user-friendly approach, a focus on data-driven decision making, and simplicity in systems and processes. "Our approach to change management is a big part of it," explained Dusseau, noting that when implementing the contract management system, much of the focus had been on making things simpler for the legal team, with the end user being a bit secondary. "We made a very determined movement and strategy to be focused on the end user, that being the person who creates the contract."

It Starts with the RFP



Assisting with a change this critical became a big part of what Ferring looked for in a partner, as well as a team that could go about collecting "any and all data that was important" and who understood the company's focus on simplicity and innovation within its system and processes. That said, to find the right fit, the team had to adjust its RFP.

Traditionally, RFPs can be long, technical, and sometimes bureaucratic in nature. According to Dusseau, an RFP like this was problematic for a team whose goals were centered on simplification. "We're trying to have this very simple approach; we're trying to be very user friendly, focused and pragmatic, but we're going to send out this heavy bureaucratic document?" she said. "If we expect to get a partner that speaks to us and our customers, who works with us in a simple, straightforward data-driven way, then we probably shouldn't start out with this personality." Instead, the team created an RFP that was much shorter and fun to

look at. “It had lots of images in it, even emojis, lots of emojis!” This RFP conveyed a message that the team was looking for a partner who understood their need to be, “simple in everything we do, not just the system, but with the processes and how we communicate.”



Enter Factor Legal

“One of the unique things that we found about Ferring, was that they had a well-articulated vision of the goals they wanted to achieve through this outsourcing relationship,” said Jessica Block, executive vice president at Factor. “Their RFP process very clearly laid out certain aspects of the work around simplification; streamlining of the workflows supporting the business. They really embraced the opportunity for continuous improvement and innovation, which I think helped Factor to stand out as a partner to them.” Noting that Ferring sought their advice and counsel based on how they’d approached workflow management, data visibility, and customer satisfaction with similar clients in the past, the foundation for a fruitful partnership was planted.

“We focused a lot on pre-launch activities before we went live with them,” said Agata Kotwica-Plisner, senior manager and deliver executive at Factor. “Knowledge sharing sessions, meetings between our team members and their team members, and supporting them by updating their templates and playbooks to get the team into a great starting position.”

A focus on relationship building was also critical for the two teams, as was seamlessly integrating Factor into the flow of the Ferring legal department. “We invested a lot to develop relationships, break down silos, and share best practices — which improved communication and brought the whole legal department closer together,” explained Kotwica-Plisner. According to Dusseau, a steering committee made up of lawyers from each division, along with members of the legal operations team worked together to define strategy and select Factor in the first place. They decided to keep that dynamic going — having the leader of legal operations and the head of legal innovation work together to manage the relationship. “It’s a new way of working from a lawyer and a legal ops perspective, because usually you’re so siloed,” she said.

Factor and Ferring would go on to form a collaborative cross-functional team, that presented as one legal team. “We changed the language and said, we’re no longer going to refer to them as Factor or even call them that in the system,” explained Dusseau. “We’re just going to call everybody legal.” To accomplish this, Factor quickly established direct contact with Ferring’s business users and legal stakeholders, and their team was given email addresses and access to the office’s Teams chat. This seamless integration drastically improved communication and collaboration, while reducing misunderstandings and delays.

Back to the Data



Factor implemented a robust tracking solution to deliver the detailed data Ferring sought, which included reporting on turnaround times by category, insights into contract types, frequently negotiated clauses, and off-platform requests. This level of visibility enabled more data-driven decision-making and process improvements, which, according to Dusseau is key to implementing change within your department and getting that critical buy-in from staff and leadership. In other words, she advises leaning into data analysis as well as starting small, noting that even tracking one or two data points can be extremely impactful.

“I promise the insights that you’re going to get from it [the data], that’s where all the gold is,” she said. “Start by looking at the data and see what it tells you. Our data told us we needed a new partner.”

Outcomes and Factors for Ferring’s Success



This partnership resulted in significant wins and improvement for the Ferring legal and business teams. Building on the established contract management framework, Factor's involvement in contract review and negotiation enhanced template standardization and workflow automation, increased self-serve contracts, improved contract turnaround time, and reduced help tickets. In fact, Ferring saw a 20-30 percent reduction in contract turnaround time, and the tracking system an 88 percent reduction in user help tickets, all of which did what Dusseau and team sought to do: improve the end user experience and simplify processes.

“The relationship that we have built and the Innovation roadmap that we built together. I'm very proud of that,” said Kotwica-Plisner when asked what made this partnership successful. “As focused as we are in looking at legal workloads or contracts as data and bringing technology and efficiency to bear, it is still a very human-to-human interaction with a lot of nuance and variability,” continued Block.

A focus on the data and an integrated approach to relationship building proved critical to this successful strategic partnership. Ferring was able to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and create a more streamlined, user-friendly contract management system. Proving that this partnering was, in fact, a winning Factor in Ferring’s success.