

Next generation legal support

Wedlake Bell

In a fast-moving and competitive market, UK law firms are increasingly looking to improve their ability to serve clients quickly and effectively.

One such firm is Wedlake Bell. In January 2016 the firm outsourced its back office functions to Intelligent Office. The aim? To better support a range of operational objectives the firm wanted to progress including:

- To optimise the value of its central London real estate
- To introduce digital working, including reducing paper and implementing e-filing
- To create a flexible and forward-thinking administrative structure, which supports growth
- To maximise fee earner productivity

Intelligent Office is helping to meet these objectives. Following a TUPE transfer of existing staff and a recruitment drive to fill new roles, we launched Wedlake Bell's new administrative service, comprising:

- Docucentre – centralised reprographics, scanning and printing, and mailroom services to release fee earner and PA time from these procedural tasks
- Procurement of core goods and facilities management services

Optimise value of London real estate

In 2016, Wedlake Bell moved from its Holborn base in Bedford Row to new premises on the seventh and eighth floors of 71 Queen Victoria Street, EC4. With 34,000 sq. ft. to use, the firm naturally wants to generate as much revenue as possible per sq. ft.

Our team, led by regional director Jo Murch, assisted with the office relocation, including:

- Managing the relocation plan for the firm including weekly meetings with all stakeholders
- Reviewing all office services and managing the procurement process for new office services – stationery, shredding; as well as managing the tendering of a number of key supply contracts such as cleaning and catering
- Designing the new Docucentre area so that the space is optimally used
- Designing a new vault space for the storage of deeds, fully auditing all deeds and wills held on site ahead of the transfer, and updating the firm's approach to deeds storage and deeds management processes to support the move
- Increasing archiving volumes by 500% and reducing paper by 200 linear metres prior to the move

Introduce digital working, including reducing paper and implementing e-filing

Digital working, reducing paper and e-filing all appeared high on Wedlake Bell's agenda, but change is difficult to bring about – particularly behavioural change. To support this strategic initiative, Intelligent Office's experience has helped to:

- Scan incoming post and implement uniform naming protocols for all digital documents to ensure they can be found easily
- Design, test and implement a new deeds database and bar code tracking system
- Introduce an online printed postage impressions service instead of the franked mail system which we expect to drive substantial savings

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Create a flexible and forward-thinking administrative structure, which supports growth

Outsourcing to Intelligent Office provides a new way of working – improved processes, motivated people, and access to the cumulative learning and best practice that comes with choosing the market leader. And, with fee earners and PAs now focused on what they do best, productivity can pick up the pace.

At Wedlake Bell, Intelligent Office has:

- Integrated TUPE-transferred and newly recruited staff to form a cohesive team, with a strong focus on customer service
- Created standards, which improved reprographic job turn-around times, call answering and general administrative duties
- Implemented post room workflow processes, in particular standardising processes around post scanning
- Introduced leadership, training and development to motivate its staff to deliver a great service to their customers

What the client says

“The transition has been excellent and seamless. The shift to the Intelligent Office model has resulted in really positive feedback from across the firm. Our Facilities Manager and his team have always provided total commitment, but Intelligent Office has enabled them to improve upon their excellent service. Long may it continue.”

“We felt that Intelligent Office had much to offer the firm and the people joining it. With its focus on training and development, continuous improvement and best practice, everyone benefits from fresh thinking and a new approach. Our support people are valued as experts in their fields and our fee earners receive professional, efficient and flexible support.”

Martin Arnold, Managing Partner at Wedlake Bell

About Wedlake Bell

London-based Wedlake Bell is a full-service law firm with 160 fee earners, including 60 partners. Wedlake Bell has a revenue of £35 million, putting it among the UK's Top 80 law firms by revenue.

About Intelligent Office

With more than 800 staff based at 43 client sites and two onshore shared services centres, Intelligent Office are the leading provider of office administrative and secretarial services to the UK legal market.

Intelligent Office helps firms in the legal sector change for the better, improving the quality of support delivered to partners and fee earners and helping firms save time and money. It achieves this by taking charge of administrative and secretarial services, leaving the firm's management free to concentrate on growth and partners free to develop and manage their practices.

The result: flexible, modern and professional support services; improved service for clients; increased profitability for the firm; and better opportunities for support staff.

The majority of Intelligent Office's services are delivered on site at clients' premises and include PA, reprographics, mailroom, facilities, matter management, front of house and core goods procurement. Intelligent Office also provides document production support both on site at clients' premises and via two onshore shared services centres in Scotland.

Other clients include Gowling WLG, Farrer & Co, Boodle Hatfield, Capsticks, Nelsons and Wiggin.

IntelligentOffice^{UK}

For more information on our range of services, please contact
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