

# Success Story

## Hunton & Williams LLP Discusses the Benefits of LegalKEY®

### LegalKEY Conflicts Management™ Streamlines the Conflicts Checking Process

Founded in 1901, Hunton & Williams LLP represents clients in more than 100 countries on six continents. Nineteen offices in the United States, Europe, and Asia house approximately 1,000 lawyers focused on a client base that ranges from start-up companies to multinational corporations.

As the firm has grown both in size and client roster, the complexity of analyzing potential client conflicts and screening new clients and matters has also increased. Interested in replacing its existing conflicts checking system, which was a module of the firm's financial management system, with a more efficient conflicts resolution system, Hunton & Williams purchased LegalKEY® Conflicts Management™ from Open Text and Open Text's NBI Core Services Layer. With the selection of LegalKEY, the law firm has been able to enhance the conflicts clearing process and provide more efficiency in terms of controlling both the report and results output.

#### Automating the new business intake process

Hunton & Williams has taken a centralized approach for processing conflicts and new client/matter requests. A dedicated team of new business intake and conflicts staff in the firm's Richmond, Virginia office manage the conflicts searches and reports firm-wide.

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- Ed Hayes,  
Business Intake Manager,  
Hunton & Williams

In mid-2005, with the objective of replacing its manual, time-consuming process for conflicts resolution, Applications Development Supervisor, Rob Priddy, developed and implemented an in-house New Business Intake (NBI) automated workflow application. A Preliminary New Business Intake (PNBI), new client intake, and new matter intake Web forms replaced a Word template that was previously used to gather the details about proposed new work. The PNBI form is used for the preliminary conflicts search that is typically requested by a lawyer upon getting an inquiry from a prospective client.

A lawyer proposing to undertake new work submits the new client matter Web form. If the proposed work is for a new client, the Web form captures information about both the client and the new matter. If the new client is approved online by the requesting lawyer's team head and by the firm's Business Intake and Conflicts team, the new client is recorded in the NBI database. If the proposed new work is for an existing client, the Web form captures information needed for the Business Intake and Conflicts team to review the new matter. If approved, the new matter is likewise recorded in the NBI database.

According to Ed Hayes, Business Intake Manager, the firm's previous conflicts checking system was outdated, labor intensive, and inefficient. "Lawyers typically requested conflicts searches via email. We would enter the names into the conflicts search system, run the report, and send it back. Then the names would have to be entered again into our internally developed client matter intake form. There was a lot of manual and

#### Industry

Legal

#### Customer

HUNTON &  
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#### Business Challenges

- Outdated conflicts checking system
- Inefficient manual processes during new business intake
- Duplicate data entry with risk of human error
- Inefficient search and results output

#### Business Solutions

- LegalKEY® Conflicts Management™
- New Business Intake (NBI) Core Services Layer

#### Business Benefits

- Streamlined conflicts clearing process
- Eliminated duplicate data entry
- Enhanced searching, filtering, and reporting capabilities
- Improved report and results output saving the firm time and resources
- Improved risk management

duplicate data entry of the same names and terms, which is very inefficient. In addition, the searches lacked the context needed for a more meaningful search and conflicts analysis, introducing differences between the results and analyses associated with the preliminary search and those associated with the client matter intake form. Finally, there was a disconnect between the preliminary search email and when the form is actually completed to submit the new client matter. Complex manual processes, if not carefully managed, can introduce risk to a law firm.”

## Integrated systems simplify data entry

In order to streamline the conflicts clearing process, Hunton & Williams purchased LegalKEY Conflicts Management in early 2008 and went “live” on September 2, 2008. To minimize the impact on end users and the business intake team, and to leverage the extensive development, testing, and training time that Rob and his team invested in its NBI form, the firm decided to maintain its internally developed NBI system.

Rob uses Open Text’s NBI Core Services Layer to effectively connect the firm’s existing new business intake system, preliminary search Web form, and databases to the LegalKEY Conflicts Management system to simplify and eliminate redundant data entry associated with multiple user interfaces. Working with the Application Programming Interface (API) for Open Text’s NBI Core Services Layer, Rob was able to map the data elements contained in the in-house NBI system to push automatically into LegalKEY, eliminating duplicate data entry and enabling the firm to benefit from LegalKEY’s unparalleled searching, filtering, and reporting capabilities.

“Now, when someone requests a preliminary conflicts search, those search terms are pushed automatically into LegalKEY’s global search with data elements such as who requested and performed the search. The data doesn’t have to be entered again into the system,” says Ed. “Likewise for the NBI client matter Web form. That data is pushed automatically into LegalKEY’s global search. When the new work is approved, the API automatically populates the LegalKEY client matter tables with all of the data, links the search log to the new client matter form, and uploads our document management system links from NBI into LegalKEY.”

Rob adds, “We also have established a bi-directional flow with LegalKEY pushing data into NBI and vice-versa. For example, if an existing client has significant outstanding invoices, someone may place an alert in LegalKEY against opening new matters for that client. Within NBI, the same alert will appear along with an actual hard disabling of the ability to open any new matters for that client.”

## Improved report and result output

One of the key shortcomings of the firm’s previous conflicts search system was its inability to filter results to eliminate irrelevant or “noise” hits—that is, literal matches to the terms searched but matches that clearly had no bearing on a conflicts analysis. As Ed explains, “The conflicts reports contained every hit found in the database on the search term. So if there were hundreds and hundreds of hits, the conflicts report would be, in some cases, a couple hundred pages. That amount of data can be overwhelming to both the attorneys and the conflicts team who may daily review results associated with 300-400 search terms and work on 70 new client/matters a day. It was not easy for the conflicts team to filter out the kinds of results that they wanted in a timely manner, which slowed the process of evaluating possible conflicts of interest associated with current and potential clients.”

Ed reports, “LegalKEY’s unique filtering capabilities give us the option to eliminate the data not pertinent to analysis of the conflicts issues. For example, we can filter out closed matters. So let’s say the report is 200 pages, but of those 200 pages, there are closed matters that would reduce the report from

200 to 100 pages. LegalKEY gives us that functionality whereas with our old system it was a straight dump that would result in wasted time and paper.”

LegalKEY filtering capabilities enable progressive narrowing of search results for unparalleled precision and ensure maximum control over even the most complex conflicts queries. Multi-line search capabilities also allow the conflicts staff to provide a single, concise report to attorneys with the results for all parties on a given matter.

“We see the benefit of LegalKEY as being more efficient in terms of controlling the report output and the result output. We spend less time looking at stacks and stacks of paper and more time drilling down on the actual result hits and evaluating them for our lawyers,” says Ed. “It saves our practicing lawyers from spending administrative time reviewing irrelevant data in conflicts reports and allows them to spend more time serving clients.”

## LegalKEY brings enhanced searching capabilities

Another shortcoming of the old system was the search function. Previously, conflicts searching was a manual process that involved several steps for the conflicts staff including searching in their accounting system, in Google, and in other internal and external databases. For example, if the conflicts staff wanted to search external sources, such as the U.S. Treasury Department Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) or the Specially Designated Nationals list (SDN), which lists individuals and organizations that have affiliations with terrorist organizations, they would have to go out to a separate Web-based subscription service to search those names.

LegalKEY offers Hunton & Williams online integration with the OFAC and the SDN list ensuring compliance with the U.S. Patriot Act and other regulatory measures. “With the Open Text system, we envision turnaround time will be faster and searches will be more comprehensive since our searches include these compliance lists as part of the external sources automatically searched,” says Ed. “We also purchased the LegalKEY integration with Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). This enables us to do conflicts searches on an entire corporate family tree—again on an automated basis, which better assists us with spotting both ethical and business conflicts issues. The D&B integration has really streamlined that analysis.”

Ed adds, “LegalKEY allows searches of our own sources as external databases. For example, we can check a database identifying lawyers serving on a board of directors of a company or non-profit. We can search against a database containing information about ongoing business development. This would ensure that the firm did not inadvertently take on new work against a company we are courting for business.”

## Preserving the conflicts landscape

The LegalKEY search functionality has also helped Hunton & Williams manage conflicts issues that can develop in the time gap between when the preliminary conflicts search is performed and when a new client matter is opened in the system. Ed explains: “The conflicts landscape is really dynamic. It can change in 24 hours. We have read of cases in which a law firm will be approached by opposite sides of the same litigation on the same day. LegalKEY helps manage this issue first by searching against the search log. That means, as part of each search, we are finding out who else might have searched the same names. It also gives us the ability to place a marker in the system prior to opening a new client or new matter that alerts others searching the database of something on the horizon. It was a major step forward in addressing our risk management.”

Ed offers an example of the value of the integrated PNBI and LegalKEY system, which was demonstrated recently when one of their intake lawyers was working on a lateral candidate and needed about 350 names searched

and the results printed out. “She sent me the Microsoft Excel® spreadsheet containing those 350 names. Since the PNBI program integrates automatically with LegalKEY, I was able to take those 350 names, upload them into the PNBI form, and submit the preliminary search, which automatically pushed it into LegalKEY without a single stroke of data entry. I was able to turn that search around for the lawyer in about an hour and a half. Plus it created the log notes to preserve the conflicts landscape. In a manual environment, that same task would probably have taken easily four to five hours to accomplish all of what was done. The benefits are improved efficiency and reduction of potential human error.”

### Managing change

Moving to the LegalKEY interface was a significant adjustment for the new business intake and conflicts staff. As Ed explains, “The old system was text based and menu driven whereas LegalKEY is a graphical interface. In addition, with LegalKEY, we have all of the different search levels and different options to filter our results. In the end, it requires more critical thinking in the sense of looking at the hits, analyzing them, and selecting or de-selecting them as opposed to simply taking the names, putting them in the search, and running the report. It’s been a major change for the staff that has historically functioned in the role of “order-taker.” As a result, moving to the new system is a change in the way they work. There were some challenges in the early stages until they became familiar with the new environment and the new look and feel of the reports. Ideally, their role will evolve to do all of the searches and as much of the conflicts resolution for our lawyers as possible so the lawyers can focus on practicing law and not be unduly burdened with much of the leg work of clearing conflicts. That’s where we ultimately want to get to.”

For the lawyers and support staff, moving to LegalKEY was a seamless transition since they still use the same interface and work within an intuitive and familiar environment to carry out tasks associated with new business intake. “That was why we wanted to maintain our existing NBI forms to minimize disruption to our end users,” says Ed. “The only impact for the lawyers was the new look of the report. Instead of getting a 200-page report with data and hits that they do not need to see, they will get a 100-page report with the relevant data that they do need to see with the bulk of the irrelevant hits filtered out. This is particularly true with bankruptcy-type matters that have hundreds and hundreds of parties.”

### Looking ahead

For the future, Ed envisions that the firm will look at some form of decentralization so staff in their international offices will have access and training to run preliminary searches. This will address the different time-zone issues and ensure faster access to information. As Rob’s use of the API pushes documentation from their NBI into LegalKEY, Ed also envisions perhaps opening up certain tables in LegalKEY to their accounting and collections departments so they can access the engagement letters and other information online as opposed to having to search in their document management systems. “A lot of times, when a client is delinquent in paying their bills, the collections staff need to see the terms that the client agreed to. They need to remind them of their commitment. So that’s where the engagement letters are particularly important in the collections realm.”



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