



Drinker Biddle & Reath Streamlines Practice with iManage Matter-Centric Refresh

Refresh helped double adoption at AmLaw 100 firm



Industry

Legal

Challenges

- Infrastructure and iManage implementation were outdated
- Overly complex matter files hindered adoption
- Matter-centricity was not standard across all offices

Solution

- Conducted audit and a listening tour with attorneys
- Implemented a matter-centric refresh
- Upgraded iManage Work software
- Deployed under information governance umbrella

Benefits

- Reduced matter workspace clutter by 95 percent
- Eliminated more than 81 million empty folders
- Dramatically improved user satisfaction - doubled system adoption

Drinker Biddle & Reath, LLP is an AmLaw 100 law firm with 620 lawyers in 12 offices across the United States. In practice for more than 160 years, the firm combines a comprehensive range of traditional legal practices with significant national roles in class action defense, corporate and securities, government relations, healthcare, intellectual property, insurance, investment management, private equity, bankruptcy, energy, environmental, education and communications.

Challenge

Over the course of the seven years since the firm's initial iManage implementation, technology had evolved, but Drinker Biddle's IT infrastructure and best practices in how iManage was implemented lagged behind.

Working with iManage partner eSentio Technologies, the team conducted a firm wide audit that uncovered 2.2 million workspaces, with 200 workspace templates housing 15 million documents – and 81 million empty folders, due to overly complex templates. Attorney interviews revealed that folder simplicity was a consistent request across teams. And, as enhancing Information Governance was an important goal of this project, a simpler underlying matter file and associated file plan was needed to support both goals.

“Despite the challenges with adoption, we believed iManage was the right product, and there was no reason to look at alternatives. After an audit of our practice, and a listening tour with our attorneys, we realized that putting our energy into the product and making it work right in our environment would save us a lot of time and money. It made sense to leverage what we already owned and what we knew.”

— Dan McLoughlin, CIO of Drinker Biddle & Reath

Products

iManage Work

ABOUT IMANAGE

iManage is the leading provider of work product management solutions for legal, accounting and financial services firms and the corporate departments they serve worldwide. Every day iManage helps professionals streamline the creation, sharing, governance and security of their work product. Nearly 3,000 organizations around the world—including more than 1,800 law firms—rely on iManage to help them deliver great client work. Headquartered in Chicago, iManage is a management-owned company.

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Solution

Refreshing iManage Implementation for Matter-Centric Collaboration

Taking advantage of improved broadband access and new data center offerings and under new CIO, Dan McLoughlin, the law firm embarked on an infrastructure upgrade and consolidation of 16 iManage libraries across 12 offices into a single library to simplify collaboration firm wide. *“We were able to take advantage of changes in technology over the past decade, including greater bandwidth at our offices, to merge the libraries into one and improve the search capabilities with the latest version of iManage,”* said McLoughlin.

At the same time, Drinker Biddle refreshed the way in which iManage was configured to better align with how its attorneys now could, and wanted, to work. The original matter files were simply too complex, making accurate filing difficult, and browsing the electronic matter file too cumbersome. Working directly with key partners in each practice area, the team arrived at a simplified standard file with 4-6 subfolders and the ability to add from a standard list. Search has been simplified and new system features such as introducing the full iManage email management suite with folder linking, suggested filing, server side filing and duplicate detection enable improved email management and faster overall performance. WorkSite Miner provided a “google like” search interface with the ability to slice and dice on the fly and dramatically improved the user perception and adoption of search. In addition, changes in firm policy and the elimination of the “to be filed” folder dramatically improved adoption of the new simplified matter files.

Benefits

Since the iManage refresh was completed, the results have been very positive. McLoughlin said that *“people are happy with the system, and we can see that they’re filing into it.”* In fact, he noted that 98 percent of users are now using the firm’s document management system, compared to less than half who were doing so prior to the refresh. With a single library and improved search capabilities, matter teams can quickly find the information they need.

With the analytics capabilities in iManage, Drinker Biddle is also able to capture metrics on the types of documents going into the system by person, practice, office and other criteria. *“This has enabled us to identify where someone may be having difficulty with the system and offer training specifically to work groups or individuals as needed,”* added McLoughlin.

McLoughlin noted that the iManage upgrades have also provided a solid foundation for governance, making it easier to track compliance and produce audit reports when necessary.

“The iManage platform, and the comprehensive training we’ve provided our employees, has given us the ability to meet our clients’ requirements for the manner in which we manage their data, track it and secure it,” McLoughlin concluded.

The next phase of information governance and electronic records readiness at the firm will look at introducing options for remote and offline use via the Mobility and OffSite modules and integrating the governance of both physical and electronic documents with the Govern product.