

An assessment of the savings possible from using document automation technology

Introduction

Today's law firms need to look at ways to reduce their cost-to-serve and increase their bottom line if they are to compete successfully in the current economic climate. Furthermore, they now face competition from Alternative Business Structure (ABS) entrants, many of which benefit from economies of scale and access to large marketing budgets.

One of the ways in which law firms can become competitive is by using automation in the drafting of legal documents, and this study was carried out to demonstrate how this can be done.

Findings

The study assessed the average time it took law firms to collect client instructions and create a first draft of three popular documents – a comprehensive Will, an employment agreement and a lasting power of attorney (property and affairs). The times were compared against Epoq's document automation system, Rapidocs[®] LawDraft.

As Figure 1 illustrates, the study showed that law firms spend an average of 86 minutes collecting instructions and drafting these three popular documents. Epoq's Rapidocs LawDraft service reduced that time to just 26 minutes.

Table 1: Average lawyer time spent to take instructions and create a first draft document versus Rapidocs LawDraft

| All times in minutes | Will | Employment | LPA | Ave |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Traditional methods | 80 | 101 | 78 | 86 |
| Rapidocs LawDraft | 25 | 25 | 28 | 26 |
| Time savings | | | | |
| Rapidocs LawDraft v traditional methods | 69% | 75% | 64% | 70% |

Conclusion

The research clearly shows that using Rapidocs LawDraft can save law firms substantial amounts of time. Across all three documents that were tested, time savings were just short of an hour and a half, on average 70% quicker than existing methods.

Clearly, a firm can achieve enormous efficiency savings in getting to first draft and then use their lawyer time to do the bespoke drafting that clients come to them for.

Methodology of the study

The study was carried out by an independent research company, Consumer Knowledge Centre*. The respondents were notified of the survey initially by a mass e-mailing, and then a follow-up telephone prompt. The telephone research was carried out by IRN Research, an independent research agency, according to the MRS code of conduct.

The documents assessed were a comprehensive Will for a married person, an employment agreement and a lasting power of attorney (property and affairs). One hundred and one solicitors (statistically significant at a minimum of 90% confidence) were given information to enable them to assess the complexity of these documents, then asked for the average time it would take them to a) collect client instructions, and b) create a first draft of the document. Their results were measured against a group of lawyers who were experienced at using Rapidocs LawDraft.

About Epoq

Founded in 1994, Epoq has been a pioneer in making law easy.

We combine sophisticated document automation technology with online delivery to enable even complex legal documents to be tailored to an individual's circumstances simply by completing an online questionnaire. Underpinned by our comprehensive range of legal document templates developed by lawyers over many years, our document automation technology is leading the way in making law easy and accessible for consumers and businesses alike.

In 2011, Epoq was shortlisted for the FT Innovative Lawyers Legal Industry Pioneer

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* Consumer Knowledge Centre is an independent market research company based in Middlesex, UK and members of MRS (the Market Research Society) and AQR (Association of Qualitative Researchers).