

Howells Solicitors: A clear verdict on Dragon.

Profile

- Legal firm with four offices
- Highly respected

Challenge

- Streamline workflow processes to drive efficiencies
- Speed up document turnaround time

Results

- Legal documents can be created in real-time
- Dragon copes effortlessly with workplace demands

The way the world works is ever-changing, and even established professions like the legal industry need to move with the times to stay competitive and keep up with new trading practices or industry regulations.

One successful law firm that's embracing technology to keep pace with change, is Howells Solicitors. One of the most admired law firms in the north of England, it operates from four offices located in Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Hull. With fairness, value and service as its core values, the firm focuses exclusively on providing personal legal services and helping clients with key events and at key stages throughout their lives.

As an organisation that regularly reviews its operations and procedures, Howells Solicitors sought a way to optimise some of its administration processes, including the speed at which legal documents were produced. This is sensible strategy, as recent research* revealed that in the legal profession, 25% of firms spend up to four hours a day working on documents, with 19% spending up to six hours a day. Reducing the amount of time spent on document creation and editing can pay dividends for productivity and, ultimately, profitability.

In solid defence of speech recognition

Chris Wong, a partner at Howells Solicitors, is responsible for preparing cases before the Crown Court and in particular the more serious cases such as murder, complex frauds and drug related allegations. He has significant experience of complex proceeds of crime proceedings. As one of Howells Solicitors' 50 users of Nuance Communications' Dragon Legal speech recognition technology, he is well positioned to explain why Dragon presents a solid business case for use in a legal environment: "Its performance and accuracy claims promised to deliver the type of productivity gain we were after, very quickly, and with very little investment. I'm happy to say that today, speech technology is much more accurate. It's very effective and the accuracy rates are very high."

It's flexible too, giving Chris and his Dragon-empowered colleagues the option to choose using the keyboard for very short texts, or Dragon for much longer and detailed documents. More often than not, Chris uses Dragon every day. "It suits my style of working. I like to see things happen in real-time, and Dragon delivers on that front. I like how I can dictate and see the results almost immediately, compared to dictating to a digital recorder and having to wait for the transcription to come back from a secretary. With Dragon, there's no waiting."

It's just as well there is little or no waiting, as Chris estimates that in a typical day, he dictates up to 15

documents - from letters to statements or summaries - an accomplishment made possible by Dragon's ability to transcribe up to 160 words per minutes.

As people tend to speak up to three times faster than they type - combined with Dragon's accuracy rates of up to 99% - means it can help even the busiest professional power through their workload. Its performance simplifies time-consuming documentation and reporting processes for a wide range of professional markets.

Every detail matters

Chris makes another observation about how Dragon benefits not just him, but the company's clients, too. He explains how it improves the quality, accuracy, and timeliness of documentation and reporting: "Dictating a case summary is a far easier process than typing, so my case summaries contain more content and are far more detailed. Therefore, if I have to advise a client of the potential outcome of a case in a letter or correspondence, I can now include more detail about the probability of that outcome, what the alternatives might be and their implications. Clients find this extra information reassuring."

Speech your way

Convinced by the efficiency benefits speech has brought to Howells Solicitors, Chris now also uses Nuance's Dragon Dictation application on his iOS device. "It's so convenient for capturing thoughts on-the-fly, especially when travelling in between meetings." It was while Chris was travelling to a meeting that his non-work related dictation caught the attention of a fellow train passenger. Initially bemused by what she saw, she soon saw the speed and convenience benefits dictation offered compared to her struggling with her device's small keyboard. Within minutes, she too had downloaded the Dragon Dictation app. The train passenger isn't the only person that Chris would recommend speech recognition technology to. "I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Dragon to other legal professionals because it is so quick and accurate. Relative to what you can achieve with it, it represents excellent value for money, too."

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it represents excellent value for money, too."**

Chris Wong, partner at Howells Solicitors

Service and support

Dragon's performance at Howells Solicitors' has been matched by the service delivered by VoicePower, the company that supplied it. "VoicePower has been a long term supplier to us and we have come to trust its knowledge and expertise. The service and support it provides to me and the other Dragon users has always been excellent, and we have always been impressed by its personal service, attentiveness and determination to iron out any teething problems."

* Notes: The "Better technology, greater efficiency" report was compiled by Techaisle and commissioned by Nuance. It was researched in September 2014 and assessed the responses of 757 small businesses with up to 50 employees in the UK, Germany and France.

About Nuance Communications, Inc.

Nuance Communications is reinventing the relationship between people and technology. Through its voice and language offerings, the company is creating a more human conversation with the many systems, devices, electronics, apps and services around us. Every day, millions of people and thousands of businesses experience Nuance through intelligent systems that can listen, understand, learn and adapt to your life and your work. For more information, please visit nuance.com.

