Case Study:

Maximising efficiencies for in-house employment lawyers through process and technology

MDR ONE

Many clients, even large multinationals, rely on small in-house legal teams for their routine operational employment legal matters. That's fine until the team is overloaded and at risk of not maximising their time to focus on business-critical strategic issues. But, there is also a business risk in not having visibility of routine operational employment legal matters.

The Client

Our client has a small in-house employment legal team in Europe. They came to us seeking a solution that would allow them to focus more on strategic high value business mandates, whilst also ensuring that routine HR legal issues of lower strategic value were properly serviced for their internal clients within the business and that they had instant access visibility of those matters. In addition to solving the legal demand issue, the client wanted data to help inform whether other actions were required to manage levels of routine HR legal issues.

The Solution

We collaborated with the in-house team to design, create and implement an online portal for their HR teams to have direct access to the MDR ONE lawyers on day-to-day HR issues, as if they were seeking help from the in-house legal team. All relevant HR team members have been issued a login and can instruct us via the portal using a set process. The instruction process combines ease of use and speed for the HR team member whilst, at the same time, providing the necessary information to the MDR ONE lawyer to begin advising immediately, without having to engage in costly fact finding with HR. It also has the additional benefit of upskilling HR in respect of instructing outside counsel in the most efficient manner.

The portal collects information through a series of pre-set questions and free-form text boxes where the user can add background material, attach employment contracts, and provide anything else that's relevant.

The online portal itself is only one piece of the jigsaw however. To ensure that the portal has maximum efficiency, we partnered with the client to develop a matter pathway/triage process so that HR or legal can decide which matters should go through the portal and which should be directed elsewhere.

We partnered with the client to deliver training to the users of the portal to guide them through the process of navigating the matter pathway and sending instructions through the portal in the most time efficient manner. As we managed the lower strategic value matters, the in-house legal team, with their own access to the portal, retained visibility of each instruction and our response.

The portal both eased their workload and saved them time whilst still enabled them to get involved with the matter if needed.

The Result

In addition to reducing the in-house team's workload and providing a more efficient service for their regional HR teams, the portal also collects valuable data which we analyse and report back to the client's HQ every quarter.
Our reports provide a quarterly overview of all new matters opened via the portal, answering questions such as: What countries were they in? What was the legal spend? How many hours were spent dealing with it? This establishes the process of: data capture – analysis – report/insight – action.

For example, our data indicated we were receiving a high volume of instructions via the portal in a specific country, where our client didn't have any in-house HR function. This was resulting in disproportionate legal spend.

The data gave our client the insight they needed to justify employing someone internally in that country, in a quasi HR/legal role. Showing our client a resourcing gap that they needed to fill proved the value of the MDR ONE portal and strengthened our collaborative relationship, which is vital to us being seen as an extension of their in-house team.

The client has seen a significant decrease in routine legal matters across the scope countries when compared to those that were being received previously (and were overwhelming legal). It is believed that this is because: (1) HR are more mindful of asking legal questions to outside counsel than in-house counsel (that can perhaps be asked later or that can be determined another way) and there has been an upskilling and ownership opportunity; and (2) as above, the data has allowed specialists to be placed in country on a strategic basis.

Two Years Later

Over the two years the client's MDR ONE portal has been operational, we've continually adapted and refined it. For example, we've ensured that when a user leaves or moves internally, their access to the portal is removed and transferred to their replacement. It also now incorporates a bespoke slide deck for training, helping new users quickly learn how to make the best use of it.
The MDR ONE portal has now become an integral part of their employment legal function and the client tells us they appreciate how it has allowed them to use data to create insight led improvements to the partnership between HR and legal.

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To discuss how MDR ONE can deliver greater efficiency and invaluable insights for your legal function, please get in touch.

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