

Mattern Leads Am Law 200 Firm Through Administrative Services Restructure

Background

An Am Law 200 firm, with 300 attorneys across multiple offices in the continental US, sought out Mattern's expertise to assess the efficiency of their administrative support structure and devise a strategic plan for its future. The firm faced challenges such as high secretary-to-attorney ratios, inconsistent processes across offices, limited centralized resources, and scant administrative support in smaller offices. Each office operated somewhat independently, despite the firm's adoption of hybrid work arrangements for both attorneys and administrative staff. This prompted a pressing need to revamp their administrative framework to better serve their legal team. Although the firm had initiated some measures to manage the effects of a dispersed workforce, they enlisted Mattern to conduct an all-encompassing review of their administrative support and propose improvements to better assist their attorneys.

Objectives

The firm lacked comprehensive data on the daily activities of their administrative staff and the extent to which attorneys were handling administrative tasks themselves, partly due to hybrid work requirements and limited administrative support availability. To address this, Mattern employed RevelationLegal, a proprietary survey tool tailored for law firms by legal administrators. This tool surveyed all personnel within the firm to identify their daily tasks and estimated costs based on employee salaries. This approach provided Mattern with valuable insights to estimate costs associated with key activities and pinpoint areas where non-billable hours could be reallocated to increase attorneys' billable hours.

To gain deeper understanding of the firm's operations, workflows, needs, and culture, Mattern conducted on-site focus groups with each practice group and held interviews with key personnel. The aim was to gather feedback from various stakeholders within the firm, comprehensively evaluating support from both attorneys' and administrative professionals' perspectives and identifying unique needs within each practice group.

Results

Drawing from the data collected through RevelationLegal, insights from focus groups, and information provided by the firm, Mattern drafted and presented a Support Services Consultation Report to the firm. This report encapsulated key feedback from staff and offered recommendations to enhance support services and improve operational efficiency.

Mattern's recommendations encompassed various initiatives, including centralizing certain aspects of attorney support services, redirecting tasks identified during onsite visits and through RevelationLegal, addressing obstacles attorneys encounter when seeking support, streamlining the support request process, ensuring equitable workloads for administrative staff to prevent burnout, establishing career paths and succession plans for administrative personnel, and increased billable hours for attorneys.

In addition to the above, Mattern also provides projected costs if the firm wishes to outsource these functions along with the projected costs to modify in-house operation. In this situation, the Firm would conservatively realize savings in excess of 20% if either path was chosen. When the Firm went through the pros and cons of the different solutions that Mattern compiled, the firm was enamored with the benefits of outsourcing these services and is currently heading down that path.

In the end, based on the exceptional results achieved, the Mattern team was pleased to receive a Net Promotor Scale (NPS) score of 10 on a scale of 1-10 from the firm's Executive Committee.

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