



CASE STUDY

Convincing managers at top level in a legal practice that change is needed



The Industry

A practice manager at a UK-based law firm was dealing with a number of headache-inducing records management issues on a daily basis, but even though they knew that a process change was desperately needed, it was proving difficult for this practice manager to convince managers at top level that the legal firm needed change.

The File Queen visited the practice and after a much-needed free consultation, she ran a full records management audit, documenting the whole process from start to finish and making recommendations for change.



The Challenge

Reluctance to change a long-standing supplier

The record storage provider that the firm was using was their preferred supplier because they had worked with them since the practice opened, and it had been the managing partner's decision to use them. The firm had become used to the slow recall of files and had never been offered the option of creating an online inventory.

Delayed file retrieval

When the firm needed a file that was stored offsite with the storage provider, it was rarely delivered on time. As they were constantly chasing orders, the practice manager asked the supplier if they could convert their hardcopy files to electronic documents and have instant access to them, however the supplier was unwilling to work towards a paper-light office.

Lack of a file inventory and retention schedule

It became clear during the File Queen's consultation that there was an absence of a file inventory system. The practice manager explained that when they requested a full file audit, they were told it would take a year to complete, and that file destruction schedule reports couldn't be produced.

Lack of control and accountability

As well as dealing with a troublesome supplier, the fee earners were venting their frustrations to the practice manager about the lack of control and accountability over the archive process – none of which was her fault. It was a nightmare trying to track files, let alone documenting how long they had had each file and documenting when unwanted files were destroyed.



The Solution

A single 'process change' document

The File Queen triaged the recommendations for change just like A&E – red for immediate action, orange for immediate second stage implementation, yellow for less urgent, and green for non-urgent. This led to a single process-change document that could be presented to the managing partner efficiently and clearly in very quick time. The File Queen made sure the recommendations for change were backed up with a warning of the dangers to process, compliance, business interruption and GDPR if no action was taken by giving examples of consequences relating to the day-to-day operations, finances and reputation.

Collecting practice-wide feedback

The ADDS supplier feedback form was distributed across the firm to everyone who was impacted by the service levels and processes from their current provider. It was crystal clear that the supplier was causing challenges across the firm and the results could then be presented to the managing partner. The approach of having external feedback and support when trying to change an internal process had a huge impact. This, backed up with written feedback results from across the firm, made the managing partner sit up, listen and implement change.



The Result

The legal practice now has peace of mind that these new records management processes comply with the GDPR.

Here are the highlights:

- ✓ The practice manager now had the evidence they needed to gain the support from top level managers and make the necessary changes to the firm's records management processes.
- ✓ The colour-coded recommendations for change meant the practice manager could prioritise urgent records management issues
- ✓ The feedback form promoted an inclusive working environment, where everyone's experiences of the archiving process could be considered