Shearman & Sterling shares knowledge to think big and think fast

**Business Benefits**
Enable attorneys to obtain easy access to a full range of law firm’s knowledge resources, from anywhere in the world; provide innovative thinking and efficient service to clients

**User Community**
More than 1,000 attorneys worldwide

**Knowledge Management Solution**
Collaborative workspaces and client Web self-service developed with Lotus® Notes®, Lotus Domino™, Lotus Sametime™ and Lotus QuickPlace®; cataloging, indexing and knowledge-sharing system to be developed with Lotus K-Station™/WebSphere Portal Family and Lotus Discovery Server™

**Business Value**
Enhanced ability to identify experts and leverage enterprise-wide knowledge resources; improved responsiveness to clients; greater collaboration and staff efficiency

Global law firm Shearman & Sterling has a corner on “thinking big.” The firm represented Viacom in its $36 billion acquisition of CBS, the largest broadcast deal in history. It facilitated the $189 billion merger of SmithKline Beecham and Glaxo Wellcome, creating the world’s largest pharmaceutical company. These and numerous other major transactions have made Shearman & Sterling, founded in 1873, one of the leading international law firms in the world and the law firm of choice for prominent financial institutions, governments and corporations.

“With the help of the Lotus K-Station and Lotus Discovery Server, our vision is to capture the collective thinking within the firm, put it in order, and simplify its acquisition for use as a starting point for future creativity.”

– Eugene Stein, Director of Information and Professional Systems, Shearman & Sterling
We strive to use knowledge management to enable our attorneys—whether in a hotel room in Beijing or at one of our offices around the world—to be just a few clicks away from all of the firm’s resources, whenever they need them.”

– Eugene Stein

The key to the firm’s success is the intellectual capital of its more than 1,000 talented attorneys. Recognizing the value of its collective brainpower, Shearman & Sterling began capturing, cataloging and indexing its rapidly accumulating pool of information several years ago. It strives to provide its attorneys—dispersed among all of the world’s financial capitals—with fast, easy access to the full knowledge resources of the enterprise. With this access, attorneys can leverage prior decisions and insights, so they don’t have to reinvent the wheel for each new case. As a result, they’re able to deliver more services to clients, more efficiently.

What makes all this possible is Shearman & Sterling’s commitment to knowledge management. Over the years, the firm has built a powerful system of collaborative workspaces using Lotus Notes, Lotus Domino, Lotus Sametime and Lotus QuickPlace, enabling its attorneys to share documents and communications related to client cases. Building on this foundation, the firm is currently piloting the Lotus K-station portal software and the Lotus Discovery Server engine, Shearman & Sterling is further customizing its extensive technology infrastructure to meet its knowledge management goals—suiting both its organizational structure and its attorneys’ unique preferences and work styles.

“To compete effectively, we need to meet our clients’ needs with increasing speed and efficiency,” says Eugene Stein, the firm’s director of information and professional systems. “We strive to use knowledge management to enable our attorneys—whether in a hotel room in Beijing or at one of our offices around the world—to be just a few clicks away from all of the firm’s resources, whenever they need them.”

Building a more collaborative culture

One of the first large law firms to provide its attorneys laptop computers, Shearman & Sterling was already gaining expertise in Lotus knowledge management technology when Stein heard about the K-Station and Discovery Server. The timing was perfect because the firm needed to improve its knowledge-sharing capabilities. According to Stein, Shearman & Sterling is undergoing a complete shift from a “need-to-know” culture to a “need-to-share” culture.
“Every lawyer in the world has a file drawer full of ‘stuff’ that he or she thinks is important and will refer to,” notes Stein. “Our challenge is how to take that ‘stuff’ and organize it for individual lawyers, while enabling them to share these resources with every other lawyer.”

Stein continues, “Another motivating factor is our lawyers’ prospective shift from the traditional time and materials billing to fixed rate-based billing, some of which they do today. This portends many benefits for the customer, but it also mandates faster access to specific content and expertise because inefficient utilization of resources means lower profit margins.”

Much of an attorney’s “stuff” concerns client matters—a matter being the term used in law practices for cases or projects. Shearman & Sterling built its team workspaces using QuickPlace, enabling team members to collaborate and receive updates on particular matters—including schedules, depositions, witness lists and links to related cases. Lotus Sametime, which enables realtime chats, is also embedded in each workspace.

Lotus K-station is being piloted as a front end to these workspaces. A K-station portal, which integrates with QuickPlace and Sametime, allows each team member to design how they want to view data and be updated on a case’s progress. Using a Web browser-based interface, attorneys can categorize their personalized content by topic area on tabbed pages, which resemble physical file folders, and organize their files, e-mails and other forms of information in “personal places.” Similar “community places” provide areas for team collaboration. To address “need-to-know” situations, Shearman plans to take advantage of K-station’s customization features for password-protected access.

Finding information quickly

Stein is also testing Lotus Discovery Server and its ability to automatically create taxonomies to catalog and index documents—from spreadsheets to e-mail communication and even Web content—and make them readily available. As Discovery Server organizes all information through these taxonomies, it continually “spiders” (re-evaluates and refreshes) data to keep it up to date. The solution even identifies experts throughout the firm on particular legal issues or areas, making it easy for attorneys to take advantage of specialized knowledge.

To be successful, Shearman and Sterling’s lawyers need to be able to think big and fast—and by tapping into the insights and experiences of their peers, they’re making big things happen.
Says Stein, “Our attorneys can’t afford to spend time and resources redoing what has already been done whenever they need data. Our philosophy is to never be more than two clicks away from any piece of information.”

Consider an attorney working from a hotel room in Madrid, preparing documents for a client meeting on an intellectual property case. The attorney can access external company resources about patent laws along with the firm’s collective knowledge gleaned from similar cases and experiences. He or she can use Sametime to see if other staff attorneys with relevant expertise are online, and then conduct real-time exchanges to get immediate assistance. In this way, the attorney overcomes the two major obstacles to knowledge sharing—time zones and busy signals.

**Keeping clients and staff in the know**

Shearman & Sterling’s knowledge management system captures and organizes details on clients in the same way that it handles client matters. In fact, the firm even uses QuickPlace and its extranet capabilities to allow clients to access information related to certain matters. “Clients like being able to check on the status of a case without having to spend time sending e-mails or placing a phone call and awaiting a response,” explains Stein. “They tell us that this capability helps the case move faster, and that’s exactly what we’re after.”

Concludes Stein, “Clients hire us to solve legal issues in their favor, and that requires fast and creative legal thinking. With the help of the Lotus K-Station and Discovery Server, our vision is to capture the collective thinking within the firm, put it in order, and simplify its acquisition—for use as a starting point for future creativity.”

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12-01
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