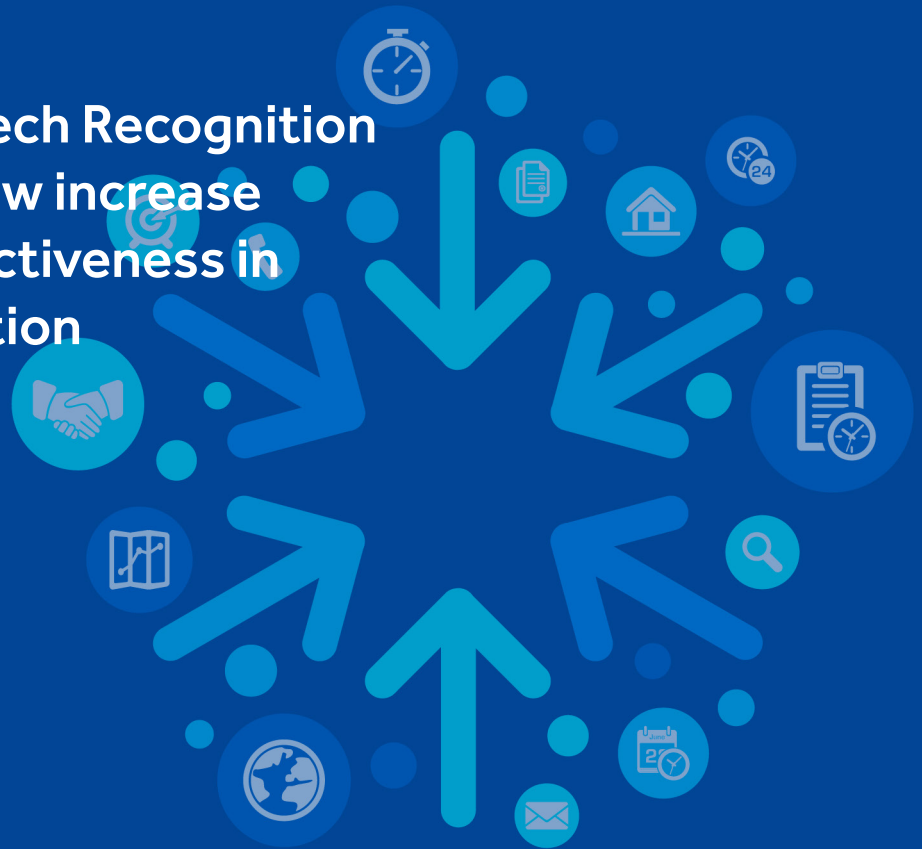


Case study: Tees Law

Smooth Operator: How BigHand Speech Recognition has helped Tees Law increase efficiency and effectiveness in document production



Streamlined: Tees Law approach the 'Business of Law' with a new perspective

Overview

Tees Law ranks as one of the top 200 law firms in the UK, with 24 partners and over 240 staff across eight specialist departments. Tees are a major regional firm that has been part of the East Anglian community for over a century, with five offices in Bishops Stortford, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Saffron Walden and Royston.

The firm prides itself on its customer focus, with a core ethos being to help produce the solutions to its clients' problems as effectively and efficiently as possible. Minimising resistance and friction in its own internal processes and workflows is key to achieving this.

A fresh perspective

When Ashton Hunt was appointed as Group Managing Director at Tees Law in October 2015 he joined an organisation that was already progressive in its structure and technology adoption. The firm was a long-standing user of dictation software and had already successfully undertaken an initiative to restructure its support team away from the traditional one-to-one PA to lawyer relationship into a centralised document production resource.

However, with his background in manufacturing, part of his remit at Tees was to approach the 'business of law' with a new

perspective. Ashton readily identified that there were significant gains to be made by further streamlining the way in which document production was actually taking place.

"Because of the way in which we categorised documents that were being submitted to the central production team, certain documents – attendance notes in particular – would fall to the bottom of the stack," he explains. "As a methodology for coping with the high volume of work that needed processing, it was very sensible. But if you consider the lawyers' clarity of recollection of a meeting that was four days in the past in reviewing things like attendance notes, it was a potential area of weakness."

Minimal touch points

Tees Law had already instigated an upgrade to its existing practice management system and it was following that when Ashton and Head of IT, Andee Tyler, attended a technology fair in London where they came across BigHand's Speech Recognition software and mobility app.

"We recognised that if we could embrace a technology that would allow our lawyers to capture their thoughts in the moment, it would have the potential to significantly improve the way matter would flow through the firm," Ashton says.

“The objective was – and very much still is – to get to the stage where we touch something once and move it forward for optimal efficiency. BigHand presented us with that opportunity.”

- Ashton Hunt, Group Managing Director at Tees Law

Improved processes

In the nine months since BigHand Speech Recognition was introduced, Tees Law has seen a significant number of its fee earners embrace the technology, with speech recognition dictations taking on average a third of the time to process over a dictation sent to normal transcription.

As Ashton explains, “Those who are advocates have recognised the benefits of being able to dictate on the go, send the dictation to be transcribed automatically, and move on to the next job they need to do.” The firm is also seeing growing adoption of the mobile app. “It’s a very encouraging sign of lawyers genuinely trying to capture the moment, in the moment,” he continues.

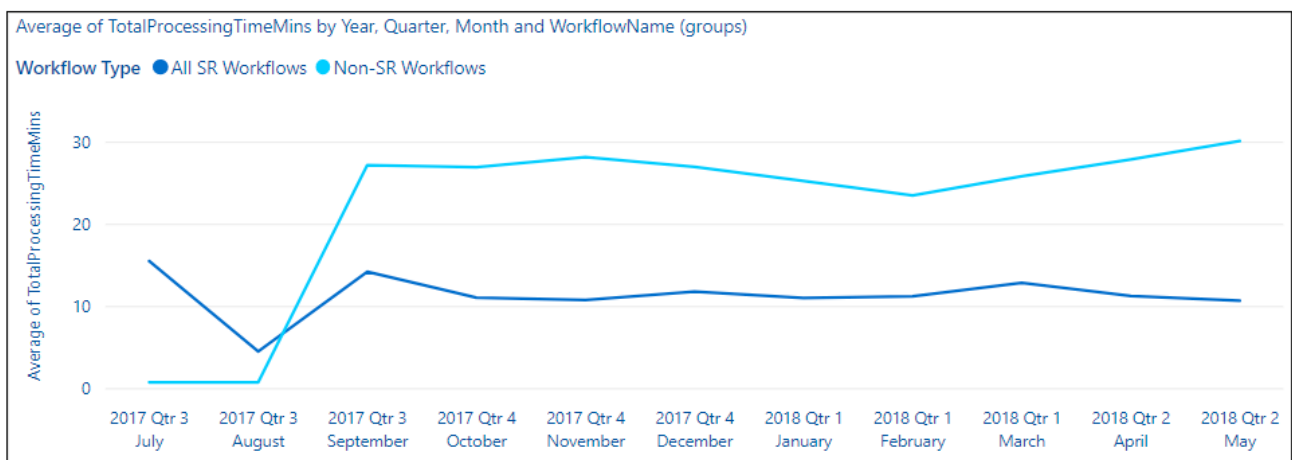
Moreover, the benefits have extended to the document production team, who are now better able to manage their workflows and focus on the complex legal and client matter documents. Turnaround times for these important documents have halved, and in some cases can be prioritised so they are completed within a matter of hours. “The resistance and friction within the production process has been almost completely removed,” Ashton says.

Andee Tyler adds, “At the outset, the support team were a little wary of the new technology, but the opposite has proven true. We undertook a training programme to upskill them, so their work is now far more varied and more fulfilling.”



The technology has also freed up capacity that is allowing Tees Law to experiment with new concepts, such as central file opening, providing the administrative team with the opportunity to engage with clients and capture their details on the PMS so that everything that flows from that point is on the basis of a complete client record.

“The solution has led to a whole raft of benefits around process enhancement, freeing up resource, and giving that resource more fulfilling functions within the firm. What’s more, it is really setting a firm foundation for us to operate effectively and efficiently within the business of law,” concludes Ashton.



Tees Law began rolling out BigHand Speech Recognition in July and August of 2017 and saw a marked increase in the speed of turnaround for speech recognition dictations within the first two months.