



Overview

- ◆ **Firm:** Herbert Mallam Gowers
- ◆ **Area of Business:** General practice - individual and business
- ◆ **Location/s:** Oxford and Bicester

Business Challenges

- ◆ Case throughput too slow during peaks of work
- ◆ Rising support staff budget

Objectives

- ◆ Eliminate typing bottlenecks that emerge during busy periods or when support staff are sick or on holiday
- ◆ Provide fee earners with the administrative support they need to operate effectively
- ◆ Minimise cost & time spent employing temporary staff



“Having Voicepath manage the whole [dictation/transcription] process is exceptionally convenient. It has proved itself as a beneficial service to the firm.”

*Stephen Ewens,
Partner*



Challenge

Herbert Mallam Gowers is a law firm based in two offices in Oxfordshire and is part of the Nationwide Independent Solicitors (NIS) Group. It offers a wide range of general legal services to both businesses and individuals.

Being a busy regional firm with a wide practice area poses a number of challenges to Herbert Mallam Gowers – in particular that of ensuring that the firm is adequately resourced at all times. Partner Stephen Ewens comments: “Like all other legal practices we frequently experience peaks and troughs in our workload. These can put pressure on us, especially on occasions where there is more work going through the system than our existing workforce can comfortably deal with.”

“This particularly applies to the typing and transcription of documents. Fee earners can often see bottlenecks emerge in the system during busy periods or when support staff are sick or away on holiday. Making sure their fee earners have enough administrative support is crucial to a firm’s success; but so is ensuring the cost of this support is kept in check.”

This has often led to Herbert Mallam Gowers turning to temporary staff to complete support work it had no internal resource to deal with.

Firm administration manager, Pauline Swain, comments: “Before Voicepath came on board, I frequently had to resort to using temporary staff to plug gaps. Not only was this relatively expensive, but it was difficult to ensure they were proficient or had experience in the right areas.”

The time, trouble and expense spent sourcing support in this manner also directly affected fee earners and their ability to operate effectively. Stephen Ewens continues: “The fact is that fee earners need support to progress their cases, and a case that can’t be progressed can’t be billed.”

This issue became especially pressing for Stephen after a redundancy left him and another partner sharing secretaries. He adds: “I was faced with using temporary staff when there was more work on than our internal staff could manage. Some temps were good, but equally some were useless. What I needed was consistent, high-quality support able to transcribe dictations quickly.”

Solution

Herbert Mallam Gowers found just such a source of support in Voicepath, an outsourced document transcription provider which specialises in typing for UK law firms.

Voicepath is able to manage a firm’s entire document transcription process and integrates seamlessly with a practice’s digital dictation system, allowing fee earners to outsource dictations as easily as sending them to internal support staff.

“Our ghost secretaries, as we call Voicepath, have played a key role in speeding up workflow at the firm. ”

*Stephen Ewens,
Partner*

“Before Voicepath came on board I frequently had to resort to using temporary staff. Not only was this relatively expensive, but it was difficult to ensure they were proficient or had experience in the right areas.”

*Pauline Swain,
Administration Manager*

Partner Stephen Ewens comments: “Like all other legal practices we frequently experience peaks and troughs in our workload. These can put pressure on us, especially on occasions where there is more work going through the system than our existing workforce can comfortably deal with.”

Dictations are allocated to the company's nationwide network of home-based experienced legal secretaries for transcribing. Documents are then returned to Voicepath for proof reading and only once they have been fully checked are they returned to the fee earner.

As Voicepath's clients pay for transcription on a per minute of recorded dictation basis, it is a cost-effective solution which allows them to get as little or as much support as they need without having to pay for 'down-time'.

After initially committing to a trial period, the firm soon saw significant enough benefits to warrant outsourcing a proportion of its transcription work to the company on an ongoing basis.

Benefits

The speed, reliability and availability of Voicepath's transcription service has allowed Herbert Mallam Gowers to increase the speed of work flowing through the firm overall and to smooth out the peaks and troughs in its workflow.

Because Voicepath gives the firm access to a pool of expertise on a pay-as-you-go basis, every penny it spends on transcription support is well spent. And with this extra resource only a few mouse clicks away, the firm now has somewhere to turn in the event of staff sickness, holidays and sudden upturns in work.

Stephen Ewens adds: “Now that the service is bedded in, our 'ghost secretaries', as we call Voicepath, have played a key role in speeding up workflow at the firm.

“I find it especially useful for typing up long attendance notes, files notes or memos which I typically deal with when our support staff are out of the office. Outsourcing these transcriptions means they come back a lot quicker.

“What's more, being a fully secure service, it is also an ideal choice when typing up confidential notes. It is certainly much more secure than using temps.”

The service is also playing a part in making working lives at the firm better for fee earners and support staff alike. Pauline Swain comments: “From my point of view, using Voicepath's 'ghost secretaries', is a much more efficient way of keeping our support staff's workload manageable.”

And from a fee earner's point of view, Stephen Ewens adds: “With no more queues for transcription, I am able to work more quickly and efficiently.”

Testimonial

Stephen Ewens concludes: “Having Voicepath to manage the whole process - from us sending off a dictation file right through to them returning a finished, fully checked word document via email - is exceptionally convenient. In a relatively short space of time it has proved itself as a beneficial service to the firm.”