



Breakthrough digitalisation enhances quality and performance



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DLA Piper Denmark took a quantum technological leap in 2022. An intense and wide extending automating process has streamlined work processes and maximised our service quality. Routine tasks are now entrusted to technology, letting our attorneys and assistant attorneys focus on legal issues and client needs. Head of Legal Tech & Knowledge Management, Christina Jønby, talks about a busy year with automating processes, knowledge sharing and dedicated legal staff.

In 2021, DLA Piper Denmark embarked on the thorough process to digitise its business. A strategic unit, Legal Tech & Knowledge Management, was set up to plan and run developments. Christina Jønby was employed as unit head, and since then activities have accelerated at full speed, not least in 2022, she says.

"In just one year, we have automated legal documents across 16 practice areas, which represent more than 1,500 templates, i.e. long or short standard documents containing predefined legal contents. The automating process can be complex, as the documents must contain any possible variation of the legal advice in question. To get this far in a complex automating process within such a short time is unprecedented in its scope - and a quantum leap forward."

Digitising templates primarily includes automating standard tasks, she explains.

"Now, we no longer need to start from scratch when drafting new documents. Instead, we can leave a major part of the job to technology. For drafting a memorandum of association, the system will ask questions about corporate structure, object, secondary names, board of directors, executive board, share capital and financial

year, etc. The answers to the questions are entered, and a finished memorandum of association in our layout form, with appendices such as articles of association and register of shareholders etc., will see the light of day. This procedure goes for all our practice areas – employment, real estate, etc.”

Great commitment and dedication from our legal specialities

But this is no cake walk, as the automating process is a result of intense and meticulous efforts based on a well-thought process. Christina Jønby explains:

“First of all, we look into a huge amount of data to be systematised, analysed and structured. The questions must serve to identify all combinations in a finished document, and that requires analysis as well as a sharp mind.

When, for instance, a document for e.g. a general meeting is drafted, the sequences of questions must take into account every thinkable variant. As a matter of course, documents will then be cross-checked and controlled several times to ensure quality and that any combination document can be prepared.

Besides the automating work, extensive and determined efforts were also devoted to the project planning, Christina Jønby says. “I believe that one of the reasons why we have come this far within such a short time is that our first step was to map out the work and prepare a strategy. What had to be done, what were the priorities, and where should the first move be made? One of our first top-ranked priorities was to get everyone on board.”

“A change such as digitalisation cannot be implemented without the active involvement of your organisation. Therefore, we worked hard on describing the purpose and demonstrating the value of this new technology. Of course, management must back up the idea, and we enjoy full support all the way. A decisive factor for the implementation was that our practice-group specialists participated actively in the document-automating process, and I’m impressed by their enthusiastic dedication and involvement. The entire organisation has been prepared to take a giant step towards digitalisation and to embrace the entailed impact on work habits and routines.”

“The automating process is a result of intense and meticulous efforts based on a well-thought process.” Christina Jønby, Head of Legal Tech & Knowledge Management

Optimum use of tools

Digitalisation is not just about automating processes, it is also about adopting new work approaches, and communication and training have been the key elements in our efforts.

“Digitalisation requires adaptability and learning readiness of our colleagues, who will be applying the new work processes on a daily basis. Our team includes a digital learning instructor, who will help ensure that new staff will be equipped to apply our technologies consistently using their full potential of our technologies. In 2022, our Legal Tech team held more than 50 training courses on the new processes. The team focuses on training in both existing and new digital tools to ensure optimum use of all our IT. Obviously, full optimisation and use of old as well as new systems will create added value for our business. Digitalisation of a business is not just about optimising processes and changing work habits - it involves competency development and training.”

The advent of new technology in the legal industry marks a significant and permanent change in both work approaches and work life.

"For many years, law-firm work processes generally remained unchanged; however, technologies change, and adaptability has now become a vital factor. Today, we work in a certain way, but new tools may turn up, and we will then have to approach work processes in a completely different manner. Therefore, one of the purposes of our digitalisation process is to develop a digital mindset where we regularly upgrade our digital competencies in the same way as we upgrade existing tools. It is all interconnected. New technologies will continue to emerge, and we must be able to adapt rapidly to harvest gains for the benefit of ourselves and in particular our clients", Christina Jønby explains.

Improved quality to our clients

The most evident outcome of our digitalisation efforts is efficiency, but several other advantages have come in its wake, Christina Jønby says.

"The result is an overall improved quality of our documents, including our legal services. Another gain is consistency. These automating processes also ensure that now, we apply the same standard documents, which follow completely identical layouts across our firm and to a large extent the same procedures. That enhances our collaborative relations and cohesive force across our areas of expertise and practice areas and contributes to creating structure."

Gains go straight to clients

"Improvements in our business are of no value if we cannot turn them into value for our clients. Our engine is now more tuned, and knowledge sharing has become a part of us, and we use our competencies more efficiently. We can, therefore, provide assistance of improved quality, and our legal staff can focus on the challenging issues, legal substance and individual client needs. At the same time, we have become more flexible as an organisation. We can swiftly adapt to new requirements and challenges."

Digitalisation efforts continue, as technologies continue to develop, and exciting opportunities await across the horizon.

"New developments turn up within i.a. AI, which means that we can automatise more documents and, in overall terms, develop advanced solutions of benefit to both us and our clients. To be part of a large international organisation allows us to gain further digital muscles by means of resources, which, in line with developments, regularly create digital client-oriented solutions", Christina Jønby explains.

All-in-one knowledge house

One of our attorneys, who has been most closely involved in the digitalisation efforts at DLA Piper Denmark, is Partner Martin Christian Kruhl. He has been running the project from the business side and is very pleased with its outcome.

"Now, it takes much less time than before to draw up a document, for instance within corporate law. If you wish to draw up a memorandum of association, you will answer several questions, and then the document will be ready. In practice, the steps in the digitalisation process were that our legal staff members listed the documents they wished for and subsequently quality assured the legal contents. Then, the contents were coded, and subsequently, together with Christina, we reviewed the draft questionnaires to ensure that the questions served to identify all combinations and that all eventualities had been considered."

"Thus, digitalisation has brought evident benefits to DLA Piper and thereby our clients", Martin Christian Kruhl says.

"We have boosted our efficiency, improved quality assurance, and we have standardised our documents, and now, to an even greater degree, we act as an all-in-one knowledge house. Thereby, our assistance will be of improved quality and provided at shorter notice. Today, technology is a key part of an attorney's toolbox, and we intend to continue to develop solutions that improve our performance."