

Century-old law firm makes an investment in its future with LexisNexis® InterAction®

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Ed Schechter, Chief Marketing Officer, Duane Morris LLP

Duane Morris LLP, among the 100 largest law firms in the United States, is a full-service firm of over 550 lawyers representing clients across the nation and around the world. Throughout its 100-year history, Duane Morris has fostered a collegial culture, where professionals work with each other to better serve their clients. Leaders in a range of legal disciplines and with diverse backgrounds, lawyers join Duane Morris in order to use the latest technology, professional support staff and other resources in pursuit of clients’ goals.

A strategy for success

As part of its 2005 goals, Duane Morris undertook a strategic business development initiative whose objectives were to expand market awareness of the firm and its breadth of services, and to increase fee revenues. The initiative incorporated specific goals designed to help the firm achieve its objectives, such as: improving client satisfaction and retention; increasing cross-selling revenue; coordinating and organizing a referral tracking system; and maintaining and leveraging alumni relationships.

A customer since 2002, Duane Morris had already realized significant value from LexisNexis®, leveraging the product to centralize the firm’s Relationship Intelligence and streamline communications, marketing, business development and other essential functions within the firm. Having already profited from their investment in InterAction, firm leaders wanted it to play a central role in supporting the 2005 project. “InterAction is a strategic initiative for the firm,” explained chief marketing officer, Ed Schechter. “So we wanted to weave it into our 2005 goals.”

Schechter believed the firm could get more out of InterAction; however, he wasn’t sure of the best approach to capture the system’s power for the initiative. “We had some ideas, but needed a catalyst to help draw those ideas out,” Schechter said.

Getting a handle on goals

Around this time Schechter learned about the CRM Roadmap, a professional services offering from LexisNexis®, designed to help firms tailor their InterAction implementation to achieve strategic firm objectives. The CRM Roadmap deliverables include a definition of CRM goals the firm would like to achieve and the activities to facilitate the achievement of those goals. It also provides a review of the defined goals and activities firms must undertake internally with professionals and other stakeholders to validate and prioritize these goals. Finally, it lays out a comprehensive plan for implementing the activities, including processes, technology and people, that are needed to execute the plan. “They have developed a strategic planning process similar to what I used at Andersen,” said Schechter. “I was comfortable with this.”

Duane Morris engaged LexisNexis InterAction on the project and soon had a consultant on premises and working closely with Pat Purdy, Duane Morris' Senior Direct Marketing and CRM Manager, conducting interviews with professional users and support staff. The consultant also met with the firm's business development and marketing management teams as they were evaluating the goals of the project, and helped flesh out the objectives and determine if there was agreement. "There was only consensus on two to three items," said Purdy. "People put different emphasis on different things. So together we examined what was possible, which goals were achievable in the long versus short term, and then ranked them in terms of importance."

Purdy noted that the consultant's ability to focus the interviews and lead the discussions with the lawyers in the necessary direction was essential to success in the CRM Roadmap. "The consultant was able to keep the conversation light, yet push things along so we didn't get stuck," Purdy recalled. "Her ability to direct the interviews was excellent. If she didn't have a strong but appropriate personality, she wouldn't have been able to extract the information we needed from the lawyers."

Roadmap aids organization and execution

Once the interviews and analysis were complete, LexisNexis InterAction delivered a structured, comprehensive plan to Duane Morris that laid the framework for how the firm should deploy CRM to help meet its strategic objectives. The Roadmap deliverables included a document outlining the strategic plan, goals, activities and tasks to be undertaken. The document also summarized the interviews conducted and provided a sample communications plan for the project. Finally, it split the tasks out by teams, and provided a high level Gantt chart to illustrate how the different activities overlap to help the firm reach its goals. "The CRM Roadmap gave us a well thought out comprehensive planning and execution resource, so we're able to organize ideas, take initial steps and execute over the course of the year," said Schechter. "We would not have been able to derive a plan like this on our own, given the day to day demands on our time."

Getting a buy-in on goals

Moreover, Duane Morris uses an advisory group, consisting of ten partners who help formulate and drive high-level policy and decisions for the marketing and business development functions. Obtaining the advisors' buy in would be critical to the execution of the plan. Another component of the CRM Roadmap was a presentation outlining the consultant's recommendations. "The advisory group found the deliverables outstanding," said Schechter. "They bought into the goals and recommended following the Roadmap plan." Importantly, the Roadmap also provided clear benchmarks for measuring the firm's actual progress against the plan, and resulting return on investment. "There are deliverables and measurable goals for each of the five goals," said Purdy. "As we create project plans, we see what we're going to measure."

Broader thinking leads to bigger goals

According to Schechter, the CRM Roadmap not only plays a critical role in helping the firm achieve its objectives, it has also been a learning process to expand the firm's vision of what is possible with InterAction. "We bought InterAction on the promise of taking advantage of its Relationship Intelligence capabilities – not simply to make it an expensive Rolodex," Schechter explained. "I think that an investment in a facilitated discussion like what we had during this CRM Roadmap project is a smart move to break free of the day-to-day activities. It allows you to get the benefit of broader thinking to achieve your goals."

Specifically, Schechter believes the engagement has been invaluable in demonstrating how InterAction can directly support strategic initiatives undertaken by the firm. "The process afforded us the opportunity to put InterAction to work for us and help connect some broader firm wide revenue and growth strategies with key marketing goals."

In this regard, he confirms that the engagement was a valuable and worthwhile exercise. "The synergy that results from this type of thinking gives you a powerful result," concluded Schechter. "I am delighted with what we got out of this investment."

About LexisNexis

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About LexisNexis InterAction

LexisNexis® InterAction® (www.lexisnexis.com/intelligence) is the leading provider of CRM software and services, which enable professional services firms and other relationship-based organizations to create the relationship intelligence they need to uncover new business opportunities.

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