

# Making the most of your document review team



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I often think of document reviewers as the unsung heroes of our industry. Diligently working at sorting the wheat from the chaff, categorising documents into virtual neat piles for the legal teams' consumption. The last two years have seen the majority of review teams working remotely and therefore, missing out somewhat on the camaraderie of the review room. Nevertheless, productivity and quality has not suffered, and this simply amplifies the professionalism and dedication our review teams demonstrate on a daily basis. This leads me to ask the question – is it time to rethink the role of the document reviewer and are clients making the most of the knowledge and skills that reviewers have?

Traditionally, the division of labour between law firms and document review providers has been fairly well defined; the lawyer briefs the review team and then the reviewers read and tag documents for relevance, issues, privilege etc. Depending on the objective of the review (litigation, regulatory, internal investigation, etc.) the lawyer will then undertake some form of second level review of relevant material in order to understand the evidence, the "story". Documents are then produced to the other side or to a regulator.

What happens after that generally does not involve the original review team.

The team that has been immersed in the documents, reading the communications, getting to know the custodians through their chats, emails, Teams messages, gaining an understanding not only of the material but often the culture of an organisation and how the relationships between individuals work. All of that knowledge and insight into the facts of the matter are no longer leveraged as the next phases of the case (a chronology, document summaries, witness preparation etc) are dealt with by the trainees and lawyers.

At Integreon, we have seen a definite shift in the way our review teams are being utilised, especially with our corporate and managed services clients. The benefits that a dedicated, experienced team can bring to a matter overall are immense – from early data assessment and deep dive fact finding workflows through to the building of case chronologies for the legal teams to use.

## Early data insights & deep dive investigations

As the data collected for disputes and investigations increases in volume and complexity, it is vital that the review and analysis of it is focussed on the right areas in order to mitigate costs and risk. A skilled and well briefed review team has the ability to leverage their technology and review skills to bring categories of documents to the attention of

the legal team who can then decide what needs to undergo thorough review and what can be either sampled or discarded. Even more so if the review team has worked with the client previously and knows their data and its nuances. Engaging a review team in these early stages benefits the legal team and the matter overall, as they become immersed in the documents and the story from the outset.

It is often the case that a deep dive into the documents in the early stages of a matter can yield incredibly useful information which can help inform the strategy of the review and the case itself.

For example, having reviewers run targeted searches around key dates and key individuals and then reviewing the results. Or using analytics to home in on documents responding to particular issues. Time spent at the beginning of a matter mining into the data with experienced eyes and technical know how can have a huge impact on the outcome of the review.

## Leveraging the expertise and case knowledge of the review team

It makes sense both from an efficiency and a costs perspective. The review team is in amongst the documents from day one and they understand the story, what is important, and what the red herrings are.

**A chronology** can help the case team get a quick understanding of the key events and the supporting evidence around them. It can cover the full timeline of the dispute or focus on critical periods or key individuals. A well briefed review team can quickly compile a chronology which can include extracts from the document or a brief summary of each event and contain links to the supporting documents. This can be done within the review platform or by using a spreadsheet or table.

**Witness bundle preparation** requires knowledge about the individuals involved and how they interact with one another, the issues of the case and the evidence to support or refute them. Working under the guidance of the legal team, the reviewers can provide valuable support in assembling "virtual" bundles to be used in the preparation of witnesses.

Creating chronologies and assisting with witness bundles are a natural extension to what the review team offers.

Document review work can often be transactional in nature. Nevertheless, your review provider can be a true partner; getting into the documents in the early stages, taking care of the heavy lifting that first pass review can require and then providing knowledgeable insights through the subsequent stages of a dispute or investigation.