

Heavyweight conveyancing practice, **Lockings Solicitors**, selects Eclipse Proclaim[®] Case Management software



ECLIPSE

Lockings Solicitors is Hull and East Yorkshire's largest conveyancing practice, carrying out 7,500 transactions each year. The firm has over 100 staff across 4 offices, with around 70% of these involved directly with residential property services.

The Lockings portfolio includes a wide range of clients, from property developers and investors, through to estate agents and private individuals. The advent of e-conveyancing, and a growing need to maintain high service levels and client retention rates in the face of stiff competition, persuaded the firm to look at IT solutions for additional competitive advantage.

The Decision

Andrew Locking (pictured), Managing Partner of Lockings, set about creating a shortlist of the case management suppliers he felt could provide appropriately powerful and resilient solutions. In early 2005, an in-depth selection process involving the two market-leading conveyancing software providers, and the firm's incumbent provider, took place. Following a series of demonstrations and product reviews, Andrew selected Eclipse's Proclaim[®] case management system:



"We opted for Eclipse for several reasons. Features such as real-time online case tracking and SMS text messaging would help us to further our reputation for fast and transparent client service. In addition, Proclaim[®] stood out as very user-friendly – vital for us, as we needed to ensure that our case handlers could get to grips with the software straight away to maintain our heavy throughput of cases."

Consistency & Quality

With such a wide range of property clients, the case management system at Lockings needs to cover a variety of areas. Work for property developers, builders and existing (repeat) clients contributes around 35% of the firm's cases, and instructions referred from existing clients and local estate agents equates to around 25%. Approximately 25% of cases come from conveyancing 'panels', with miscellaneous instructions accounting for the remainder. Firm-wide consistency and ongoing accuracy of case handling is therefore vital. Andrew comments on the day-to-day benefits brought by Proclaim[®]:



"With such a high number of conveyancers, and a broad range of client needs, it is vital that the service they receive, and the standard of our work, is consistent and in keeping with the 'Lockings brand'. Proclaim[®] allows us to produce documentation with amazing speed and accuracy, and the way in which we progress cases – from start to finish – can be managed very closely. Workflow steps can be built in and tailored, as can warnings and reminders, to ensure that every case – no matter who the client – is kept perfectly on track."

PTO...

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In fact, 2006 brought two record months in terms of sheer number of file openings for Lockings – Andrew suggests that had these record highs been experienced before the implementation of Proclaim[®], the practice would have experienced a very real problem in terms of available capacity.

No Fuss...!

Proclaim[®]'s ease of use and configurability has been a key feature of its successful implementation. Not only are day-to-day amendments to workflows and ongoing tailoring straightforward to carry out, but additional features such as referrer integration are readily available. Accepting electronic instructions from estate agents, lenders and panels is high on Andrew's agenda. Lockings and Eclipse are working together to create a number of links to enable the exchange of case data with referrers – among the links is one with the 'Simply Conveyancing' panel, which will be of enormous benefit to the practice.

Lockings' original intention for its case management system encompassed solely the conveyancing function. However, so impressed was the firm with Proclaim[®]'s functionality, the decision was quickly made to extend the investment into its Personal Injury team. Says Andrew:

"Eclipse's timescales for the implementation of the conveyancing system, and their client-focused internal procedures, were very much aligned with our need for a fast install and no loss in fee earning time. Based upon this excellent initial impression, we therefore took the opportunity to also roll out Eclipse's PI system!"

The Future

Looking to the future, Home Information Packs are very much in the news, albeit still in an as-yet unfinalised state. Andrew has seen a swing in the market, and reports that the proportion of 'panel' conveyancing that the firm does has nearly doubled since HIPs and 'econveyancing' became stronger, more serious concepts.



Despite the element of uncertainty still surrounding HIPs, Lockings will be able to utilise Proclaim[®] to cater for changing market needs and pressures brought about by the proposed streamlining of property transactions. The firm is comfortably prepared for whatever the future may hold.

Andrew has the last word on his firm's investment in Proclaim[®]:

"Proclaim[®] has enabled us to greatly extend the scale of our case throughput, and also provides a fantastic foundation for future growth and the challenges presented by econveyancing. Overall, I am delighted with our choice of case management provider, and I look forward to a long and prosperous relationship!"

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