International Law Firm Kennedys chooses Plan-Net 24 to provide 24/7 IT support to its lawyers across the globe.

With offices as far as Dubai, Hong Kong, Sydney & Auckland, law firm Kennedys has moved its IT support to Plan-Net 24 in order to strengthen its ability to continue to deliver on its international growth plans.

Plan-Net 24, the only 24/7 UK-based IT Service Desk exclusively dedicated to supporting law firms, now provides round-the-clock remote 1st line support to all of Kennedys' lawyers and staff from its Central London Service Desk.

James Elmer, IT Manager & Claire Renouf, IT Operations Manager at Kennedys share the challenges they faced, the reasons that led them to Plan-Net 24 and how this decision has benefitted the organisation so far.

Supporting Business Growth

Established in 1899, Kennedys was last year ranked as the fastest organically growing law firm of the last 5 years by Legal Business 100. The firm provides litigation and dispute resolution, particularly in the insurance, reinsurance and liability industries and its global footprint includes offices as far away as Auckland, Dubai, Miami, Hong Kong & Sydney.

The law firm is committed to growing and strengthening its international capability and for the IT team, run from its London HQ, this means a requirement for a global IT platform that is stable and high-performing.

James Elmer begins "Investment in technology is important but a huge element is about ensuring we have an effective support eco-system in place, which is fundamentally about having the right people and processes embedded."

Resource Challenges

James describes the background that led to the firm's engagement with Plan-Net.

"When Claire joined a few years ago, we had a big drive on refreshing our Service Desk. We recruited and trained new staff, reviewed processes and had a really good year. However, as is the nature of the Service Desk, staff began to leave because we couldn't really offer them career progression internally. We started to struggle with the churn and subsequent resourcing challenges."

"We found it quite difficult to resource the quality of staff with the right skill-set and drive to want to do the job. In the legal sector, not only are there specific technologies to learn, the end-users tend to be quite demanding."

Claire adds, "We found ourselves in a constant state of finding, recruiting, training and performance managing staff, and having to deal with escalations of user complaints of poor performers. It meant we were fire-fighting all the time."

The general consensus among the IT management team was to explore the use of an external provider to assist. James had come across Plan-Net in a previous role in the finance industry, as had another member of the IT team, and after assessing the market further, Kennedys felt Plan-Net was in the best position to assist.

Moving to Plan-Net 24

The service alignment process began with a period of site awareness. Plan-Net 24 Analysts were deployed to work on-site at Kennedys offices alongside their in-house team.

Following this, the service delivery was transferred to Plan-Net 24, based at Plan-Net's head office in Temple in Central London. Kennedys then used Plan-Net 24 to supplement its own Service Desk with extra support capacity.

James runs through the experience, "We did have some concerns about how a third party could adopt the 'Kennedys' way of doing things, especially remotely, but Plan-Net aligned the service to mirror our in-house model. In fact, we've benefitted from the new ideas the team have brought to us about how we can improve things."

Claire explains the logistics of remote support, "Technically, it was relatively quick and easy to configure phone systems and networks to incorporate Plan-Net 24. There's always a few teething issues, but we found them to be minimal."

For end-users, there is no difference in experience. All Plan-Net 24 Analysts have Kennedys' email addresses and access to directly populate its Service Desk tool. The only impact was that the service improved.

"The fact that part of the service is being delivered by Plan-Net 24 staff and based elsewhere in London doesn't impact the lawyers at all. That was really the seamless bit about it all." James explains.

In addition, Claire meets with a Plan-Net Service Delivery Manager for regular Service Reviews that cover reporting against formal SLA (Service Level Agreement) metrics and other Key Performance Indicators. Jointly they also review Plan-Net's Continuous Service Improvement Programme (CSIP) which focuses on refining and progressing the service.

"The Service Delivery Model Plan-Net has implemented works well and if there are any issues I find there are plenty of people to turn to at Plan-Net." Claire comments.

Round the Clock Support

As day-time support was starting to stabilise, James and Claire knew they had to turn their attentions to improving the firm's out-of-hours support model.

Kennedys was using on-call IT staff to provide night-time and weekend support. This method was not only resulting in disturbed nights for staff, but also an unpredictable level of service for users and an expectation set that it should only be used in an emergency.

In addition to this driver for improvement, the firm wanted to more effectively support its international staff too. Therefore, Kennedys made the decision to extend its use of Plan-Net 24 to around the clock support.

James describes the process "Whilst there was an appetite in the business to improve the out-of-hours service, it was particularly useful to have Plan-Net's Senior Management to help us formally justify the business case to teams here at Kennedys."

The 24-hour service went live in June this year and is currently exceeding weekly Service Level Agreements.

James explains the immediate benefits of a more formal out-of-hours model. "In addition to being able to support international staff centrally and offer UK staff a better level of out-of-hours support, we can now provide a much more proactive service. Besides availability increasing, analysts working during the night can look at less urgent tickets raised during the day and provide a much quicker turnaround time for the overall service."

Moving Forward

The next big project for Kennedys IT is Project Athena. This covers the roll out of Windows 7 & Office 2013 on a VDI platform globally. It's an ambitious project the IT team at Kennedys are hoping to complete this year.

James Elmer concludes. "Working with Plan-Net has enabled us to really focus on improving the service as a whole. Firstly, we have the confidence in a Support service that will be able to maintain business as usual whilst giving us the time to focus on planning this upcoming project. Secondly, when we do move into the implementation phase, we know we can rely on a capable support function during what will be no doubt be a challenging period ahead of us."