

# Top-tier firm delivering fast, quality legal solutions with HotDocs Advance



## Client

[MinterEllisonRuddWatts](#), New Zealand based, top-tier full-service law firm.

## Problem

The firm needed to remove its dependency on legacy desktop software and move document automation processes to the cloud while continuing to integrate with existing systems.

## Solution

Looking to automate processes and integrate as many critical systems as possible, MinterEllisonRuddWatts engaged legal tech experts LawHawk and [ProLegalTech](#) to help migrate their document processes to the cloud.

*MinterEllisonRuddWatts is a top-tier full-service law firm based in New Zealand, with offices in both Auckland and Wellington. Named New Zealand Law Firm of the Year by Chambers and Partners in 2017 and 2020, the firm attracts talented counsel for a full range of legal services. Employing over 200 staff, MinterEllisonRuddWatts has a large internal team that requires streamlined processes to make collaboration, communication and service delivery fast without compromising accuracy and quality.*

## The need for speed to meet client demands

MinterEllisonRuddWatts has a reputation for being both innovative and as an early adopter of technology, including document automation. In 2020, it was apparent that the firm's legacy on-premise HotDocs Classic system was creating delays and inefficiencies. Tila Hoffman, Special Counsel & Business Transformation Manager at MinterEllisonRuddWatts says, "The desktop software we were using was becoming obsolete and no longer fit for purpose. It didn't have any cloud functionality and was creating delays that took staff away from other meaningful work."



With limited application integration options, MinterEllisonRuddWatts relied on employees to copy and paste key data from various internal systems into the document automation system; documents could auto-populate but duplicate files would be saved across disparate systems. Tila says, "The workflow of HotDocs Classic did not inherently encourage users to use it." The process created bottlenecks; a challenge the firm was eager to overcome.

The firm also wanted to meet the changing expectations of clients, who were requesting quicker turnaround times and fixed fee work. To deliver on this, it became apparent that processes needed to be further automated for the firm to meet demand.

### **An opportunity to upgrade and streamline**

With a focus on delivering legal services faster, without compromising accuracy, the firm saw an opportunity to upgrade and enhance internal

processes alongside the firm's rebrand. Tila says, "We needed consistency in appearance of all written communications, so it seemed like an appropriate time (to improve their document automation)."

Housing a large internal infrastructure, MinterEllisonRuddWatts had a list of system prerequisites that were needed to provide the firm with a single source of truth. Any new solution needed to integrate with a Microsoft Access database holding information for a key practice area, as well as other existing systems such as staff directory, finance and iManage document management.

Julian Farber, Solutions Architect, MinterEllisonRuddWatts says, "For any product change, while there might be features and services that we could gain out of it, we had to consider user experience—which comes at a cost—because traditionally users don't like change. So the more we could align an

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*- Julian Farber, Solutions Architect, MinterEllisonRuddWatts.*





*"LawHawk and ProLegalTech were instrumental in helping us come up with a solution when it became clear that the professional services fees others charged would be commercially impractical for a New Zealand law firm."*

**- Tila Hoffman, Special Counsel & Business Transformation Manager, MinterEllisonRuddWatts.**

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Interested in upgrading to HotDocs Advance from their HotDocs Classic instance to align user experience and obtain the latest in document automation functionality, the firm investigated all migration service options. They chose existing partners and legal tech experts LawHawk for their local support, innovative ideas, industry expertise and connections. LawHawk had been working with MinterEllisonRuddWatts since 2017 to maximise the results from HotDocs Classic and through being one of the earliest adopters globally were also experts in HotDocs Advance. LawHawk connected the firm with ProLegalTech, industry experts in legal application integrations and HotDocs Advance custom plug-ins. "LawHawk and ProLegalTech were instrumental in helping us come up with a creative solution to our resource constraints," says Tila. "We had legacy issues we needed to address that were specifically related to one practice area and their use of the Access database which was somewhat of an antiquated system. We needed to be able to pull from that Access database through HotDocs Advance and

it all had to be integrated." ProLegalTech worked closely with LawHawk, MinterEllisonRuddWatts and existing application providers to design, build and support best practice solutions for the firm's needs now and in the future.

LawHawk, alongside ProLegalTech, provided the expertise MinterEllisonRuddWatts needed for each system integration and helped the firm to design the interview questionnaires each legal practice needed to populate the right legal documentation. This prerequisite information was vital to the system working effectively. Tila describes the processes as complex, as input questions needed to ask the appropriate questions in the most efficient and user-friendly way to gather the right information to populate the documents. "You have to know the questions, associated guidance and legal logic to include," says Tila. "As we have many practice areas with very different processes and lots of documents this was quite complex." From day one until transaction close, users work from these core questions to create the documentation. Accuracy and consistency was absolutely critical.



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*"We've had tremendous uptake...We are already investigating how we can automate more workflows to further support our clients and staff"*

- Tila Hoffman, Special Counsel & Business Transformation Manager, MinterEllisonRuddWatts.



Tila commends LawHawk and ProLegalTech for their work on making the move to HotDocs Advance as cost effective, efficient and successful as possible. Saying, "The work LawHawk and ProLegalTech have done has been invaluable."

### **'Tremendous uptake' is only the beginning for continued legal tech innovation at MinterEllisonRuddWatts**

Having worked diligently from the outset to establish the right input questions for the document workflow automation, MinterEllisonRuddWatts are seeing great results. "We've had tremendous uptake," says Tila. "Once you do answer those questions in the information input process, everything is

automatically output and documents are saved to the designated folder in iManage. There's no need for employees to file, save as.

Our documents are now automatically where they are supposed to be with a consistent naming format." Following the associated rebranding project, all documents assembling through the HotDocs Advance system are formatted with complete consistency to the firm's modern in-house style guidelines.

Through the help of ProLegalTech, MinterEllisonRuddWatts was able to take advantage of the many integration possibilities HotDocs Advance holds and as a result, was able to integrate many of their existing applications including billing, document management, staffing and registries, but still have plenty of integrations to explore such as Dynamics 365. Tila says, "This is not the end of our automation journey. With such quick uptake we are already investigating how we can automate more workflows to further support our clients and staff."

Pleased with the overall outcome, Tila believes the automation benefits from HotDocs Advance will affect all areas of the business including the firm's portal through which clients can also access MinterEllisonRuddWatts' advanced document automation capabilities.

Continually seeking to invest and innovate, MinterEllisonRuddWatts are focused on delivering the best legal solutions to clients across New Zealand.

### **About LawHawk**

LawHawk's advanced legal automation, with its built-in real-time training and compliance, allows anyone to draft highly customised documents and complete other legal processes in minutes rather than hours and at very low cost.

Document drafts will be better quality, more consistent and compliant with key requirements. With a unique combination of legal and automation expertise, LawHawk is committed to revolutionising how high quality and consistent legal and procurement documents are generated, and setting new standards for what is possible.

### **About ProLegalTech**

ProLegalTech is an expert team of qualified technology strategists and software developers. We have over 15 years' experience helping firms leverage cutting-edge digital technologies to streamline their business.

We place people at the centre of our design process, and are passionate about providing solutions that not only save time, but are intuitive and enjoyable to use.

Whether you are choosing new case management software, creating a client portal, integrating existing systems, or developing bespoke management tools: we have the expertise to deliver the perfect solution for your firm.