

Susman Godfrey extracts more value and cost savings with Harbor's library services

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Nikki Bouis, Executive Director, Susman Godfrey

Susman Godfrey LLP is a premier litigation boutique law firm with more than 160 trial lawyers based out of four offices across the US. After years of working with a library operations service focused primarily on maintaining print volumes, Susman Godfrey determined it needed a more comprehensive and forward-looking law library management strategy.

"We were looking for targeted support and increased visibility into research resource usage data," says Nikki Bouis, Executive Director of Susman Godfrey. "We wanted to better grasp the value we received from our costly library resources, including how many people were using each resource."

After meeting various candidates, the firm engaged Harbor's Research + Intelligence advisory team.

"Harbor has a team of experienced law library professionals who provide strategic assessments, deliver clear analytics' summaries, and share market insights with their law firm clients," says Bouis. "After a Harbor assessment of our current state and recommendations for a best-in-class service, we were convinced they were a good fit for our efforts to maximize the untapped value of our firm's law library."

Increasing library resource awareness

The Harbor assessment of Susman Godfrey's current state of library operations led to the establishment of several key strategic objectives:

Increase lawyer and staff usage of library resources

Develop a strategic approach to spending and investment in high-value research resources

Create a targeted library training plan for consistent onboarding, sharing the available resources and targeted recommendations based on practice areas

Increase awareness of resources and improve access with a dashboard of the best resources organized by key topics

"One area of particular concern in the wake of our assessment was the lack of awareness of the library resources Susman Godfrey had available to lawyers and staff," explains Joanne Kiley, Senior Manager at Harbor. "Investing in the right resources for your library is step one, but it must be followed immediately by regularly promoting the resources and making them easy to access and use."



Outsource to the experts

Harbor provided Susman Godfrey with an outsourced model with dedicated library support and a team of experts with a deep knowledge of the law firm library market. This team delivered market-leading technology and resources to align the library operation with the firm's needs, assumed responsibility for managing research resource contracts by providing relevant data analysis and market insights, and offered best-in-class research support for Susman Godfrey's lawyers and legal staff.

The Harbor team implemented several specific library operations strategies, including promoting the available library resources and services across the entire firm and with a newly built library dashboard.

A diagnostic review of library spending by vendor/supplier was conducted to identify opportunities to adjust spending and shift to more electronic resources.

"We also reimagined onboarding and training for the firm's lawyers and legal staff so everyone had access to the same resources and awareness of available services," says Kiley.

In addition to Harbor's managed services, Susman Godfrey also decided to implement Harbor's tech-enabled integrated library solution, giving it a dashboard to maintain a searchable catalog of all available resources, track library metrics, and send alerts before contract renewal dates.

Finally, the Harbor team leveraged technology to transform the firm's internal workflow processes to maximize the efficiency of the library services.

Return on investment:

Online subscription expenses decreased by more than 14 percent

Library research tools used more often and by more lawyers in the firm

Firm management gained visibility into library usage and spending

Research guidance directing associates and paralegals to the best legal and non-legal resources increased by 15 percent

"The Harbor team transformed our law library operations. We have more widespread internal adoption of market-leading legal research tools and technologies and have achieved cost savings for our subscriptions," says Bouis.

"We have a better grasp on our spending and the opportunities to improve how our library supports our lawyers. For example, new associates and paralegals have a reliable expert to guide legal research strategy and resources. They can also go to our library support for efficient non-legal research, freeing up our lawyers and paralegals to focus more on client service and litigation strategy."

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Susman Godfrey

Susman Godfrey is America's premier litigation boutique. Its talented lawyers handle high-stakes litigation for plaintiffs and defendants nationwide. With more than 160 trial lawyers in four offices from coast to coast, it handles the most challenging cases throughout the country.