

# Why innovation is key to the client experience

Taskforce identifies culture of innovation as central to a client experience that sets us apart.

**T**he Firm is taking steps to embed a culture of innovation as it continues to strive to set itself apart from competitors through an unrivalled client experience.

The Innovative Service Delivery Taskforce was established last year with the remit to drive this change, identify best practice, and scale viable solutions in line with our 2025 Strategy.

Another of the taskforce's goals is to raise awareness and uptake of the many innovation tools the Firm already has.

The taskforce includes 11 members, including partners, associates and Business Services professionals from a broad range of offices and practices.

Frankfurt Partner Jost Kotthoff, who is Chair of the taskforce alongside Chief Marketing Officer Michael Hertz, explains: "Back in 2008, the English professor Richard Susskind famously predicted 'the end of lawyers' by 2015 and, while that thankfully proved incorrect, it's clear that the legal profession can't survive without embracing innovation and change."

In recent months, White & Case worked with consultancy partners McKinsey to benchmark the Firm's position compared to the world's most innovative companies.

Jost says: "McKinsey's research told us that the most innovative businesses have a clear ambition and vision of where they want to go – something the Firm has done with its 2025 Strategy.

"The best innovators also scaled solutions successfully, which shows that investing in our Practice Technology and Legal Project Management teams has been the right move.

"In addition, we've made a significant investment in innovative service delivery, introducing several market-leading technologies to support both dispute and transactional practices and increasing grassroots initiatives, such as the LIFT initiative that began in London and has been adopted in various regions."



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## Accelerating improvements

But, to make real progress, the adoption of these new tools and methods needs to increase.



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Jost says: “Our clients are becoming increasingly tech savvy and, with increasing pressure on costs, they expect their legal counsel to be equally creative in seeking new ways of working that can give them a vital edge and save them money.

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And it’s not only clients who are demanding service innovation – the new generation of legal talent also expects to have the technological tools and working practices to do their job efficiently and reach their potential.

London Associate Judith Ollloh, who is a member of the taskforce, explains: “I found out about the Innovative Service Delivery Taskforce when trainees I supervise raised frustrations that we weren’t making the best use of our chat tool, Jabber, and new technology in general.

“When I passed their feedback onto a partner, they asked me if I’d be interested in joining a new taskforce that was being set up to address exactly that kind of issue.”

Judith accepted the opportunity and is one of three associates on the taskforce alongside New York-based Jackson Herndon and Constantin Teetzmann of the Berlin office.

Judith says: “We were the first associates to be invited onto any global taskforce. I think it’s amazing that the Firm is recognizing the value of our opinions. After all, we are the ones who’ll be using these tools and putting this plan into action. It’s great to be seen and heard in this way.”

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ASSOCIATE, LONDON



## Innovation in action

Judith has seen the benefits of innovative service delivery in practice. In 2020, she suggested that her team use document-processing tool Luminance for an urgent cross-border matter.

"Canadian mining company Ivanhoe Mines needed us to review thousands of documents in a very short timeframe (about two weeks) to identify anything that they'd need to disclose before a major bond issuance," she says.

"It was clear that we'd not be able to do that on time without innovating, so I suggested we try Luminance.

"We'd not used it before but, following a 30-minute onboarding session, we were ready to go."

Luminance uses artificial intelligence to automatically read scanned documents and sort them into different languages and types of agreement. It is also trained to distil clauses, saving a huge amount of manual labour.

Judith says: "The short time we spent getting up to speed was insignificant compared to the thousands of hours it would have taken to go through the documents manually.

"While technology can't do the value-added things that require legal expertise, Luminance saved us a lot of time organizing and identifying documents that, for instance, needed to be reviewed by French or Spanish-speaking teams.

"We also used Luminance to allocate tasks and because the tool is synced to the client data room, anything they uploaded was automatically available."

According to Judith, the use of Luminance benefited the client, the Firm and the team itself.

She says: "Anything that helps us minimise billable time spent on manual tasks that can easily be automated has got to be good. It means we can focus on doing the things our clients value – analysing complex legal concepts – and we can complete the work more quickly and efficiently, improving our service to the client, potentially for less.

"Legal tech is booming, both for our clients and for us and, considering we are at the top class in terms of legal knowledge and global coverage, it's important that we also excel when it comes to innovation.

"Many people still don't know these tools are available or how to use them and that's one of the things the taskforce is looking to improve.

"That's why we're looking to create innovation champions across the Firm to increase awareness and usage across offices and practice groups."



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## **“Our four-phase strategy was to aspire, diagnose, design, and implement”**

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CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

### **Building a culture of innovation**

Increasing the use of existing tools is one element of the taskforce's approach to fostering a culture of innovation, but other elements include improving the accessibility of tools on Connect, sharing examples of innovative service delivery at team meetings, and developing, testing and scaling new solutions where appropriate.

Michael Hertz says: “Through our work with McKinsey, we cemented our ambition and areas we needed to progress, learning the things that stop us making the most of innovation.

“This identified that we needed a more consistent approach in the way we scale solutions and we're now developing the processes, templates and documents needed to execute this plan from the third quarter of this year.

“Our four-phase strategy was to aspire, diagnose, design, and implement and, having completed the first two phases, we've been working with two teams who were already exploring innovative working approaches (the Debt Finance team in the United States and the EMEA Competition team) to see how the taskforce can support them in introducing and scaling their ideas.

“What we're learning is helping us establish a model for introducing new innovations in other practice areas.”

One new idea that the taskforce is assessing with the EMEA Competition team relates to how White & Case can use technology to more easily engage local counsel and collaborate with them on matters. Michael says: “As an elite international firm selling a seamless cross-border service, we need a more sophisticated way of managing our local counsel. There is also substantial value from tracking and managing our referrals to and from local counsel.

“If we get this right, we believe it will be an innovative way of working and will deliver significant impact for our clients and the Firm.”

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## Existing tool proves its worth

The taskforce is also working with the Debt Finance team in the Americas as it looks to implement a range of existing practice technology offerings into the team.

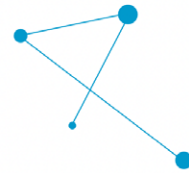
In 2021, the practice completed a comprehensive 45-point review of 370 loan agreements using Luminance to expedite the process.

New York Debt Finance Partner Elizabeth Kirk says: "We were able to leverage the power of Luminance's artificial intelligence technology to increase the speed of our reviews and reduce the overall time spent on the project and per document. This was critical for us in the fall of 2021 when utilization levels in the team were at all-time highs."

Compared with a parallel manual review on the same project in other regions, the Americas Debt Finance team was able to reduce review time by about five hours per document.

Elizabeth says: "This project illustrates how impactful technology and new ways of thinking about our work can be. The efficiency and financial impacts are obvious, but the impact to our people in terms of time saved and their ability to prioritize other time-sensitive client projects was what made using Luminance a lifesaver for the team."

"We have already started and completed another similar Luminance project with great success and are continuing to evaluate how we can incorporate AI and other practice technology into our day-to-day work."



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ELIZABETH KIRK,  
PARTNER, NEW YORK



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## A united strategy

The taskforce is encouraging people across the Firm to get in touch if they have ideas for innovation.

Jost says: "Teams or individuals who have an idea can simply contact us and we'll work with them to flesh out their idea and its potential."

"It's about rapidly deciding if an idea has the potential to make a valuable difference. If so, let's help the person with the new idea access resources and to navigate the Firm so that the new idea can be developed and rollout. And if not, we won't invest the time and money needed to explore it further."

Michael adds: "While technology is often the enabler, what we are really interested in is changing the way we work for the benefit of our clients and people. Ultimately, we're investing in innovation that will have a positive impact on the client experience and that will set us apart from our competitors."

"I think everyone now realizes that things need to change. It's the job of the taskforce to support people in making that change."

