

ENSURING QUALITY: A MANAGING ATTORNEY'S TAKE ON LEGAL OUTSOURCING



LEGALEASE
SOLUTIONS LLC

Ensuring Quality: A Managing Attorney's Take on Legal Outsourcing

When United States attorneys evaluate the efficiencies and savings of outsourcing certain legal tasks, they find themselves weighing the merits of two different LPO business models: The entirely offshore model versus the blended onshore/offshore model.

While an entirely offshore model connects the client directly with the offshore office, the blended onshore/offshore model inserts a layer of United States based attorneys to work with the client and shepherd each project.

This layer of onshore managing attorneys serves a number of crucial functions, including project management, quality control, and as a liaison directly from one U.S. attorney to another.

LegalEase Solutions LLC is a leading proponent of the blended onshore/offshore model. Christopher Crawford, a former managing U.S. attorney of the company, shared his perspective on the structure and value proposition of utilizing onshore attorneys.

When a client approaches an LPO with a blended onshore/offshore model, how is the work organized and what is the workflow process?

“Initially, the client will contact the U.S. office about a project. A U.S. based attorney will then get the client specifications for the project, including all facts, documents and directions needed to complete the project. The U.S. based attorney then reviews the project, doing preliminary research and drafting as necessary. He/she then assigns components of the project to the offshore attorneys with specific instructions for the completion of the project.”

What is the review process?

“The U.S. and offshore team work together to complete the project, much the same way an associate and a partner would work to complete a project at a law firm. There is a constant, open line of communication between the two offices for feedback and to answer any questions that may arise. Once the project is complete, a U.S. attorney gives it final review and approval for delivery.”

What are the types of work that you have seen translate successfully to being outsourced?

India is a common law country, and the attorneys there have all gone to law school. So they can be trained to do any legal work that a U.S. attorney can be trained to do. We have successfully assisted law firms and corporations in many areas of the law including research and writing, contract drafting and review, discovery and document review, drafting of motions, briefs, and pleadings, as well as all general paralegal services.

Generally, what is the breakdown in terms of the percentage of work executed by the offshore attorneys and the percentage executed by the onshore staff?

“It can really vary. Depending on the complexity of the work, it ranges from 10% onshore to 90% onshore. The benefit to the client is that the cost does not change whether the work is performed by a U.S. trained attorney or an India trained attorney.”

What are the educational backgrounds of the offshore attorneys?

“All Indian attorneys have graduated from an accredited Indian law school, which requires either three or five years of schooling, depending on the law degree obtained. We only hire those that have graduated within the top 10% of their class.”

How are the attorneys trained once they join LegalEase?

“LegalEase has its own six month training program, designed by a Harvard Law School graduate. All LegalEase attorneys must complete that training program before working on live projects. This program is designed to teach the attorneys the major distinctions between U.S. and Indian law, and to give the Indian attorneys an opportunity to further hone their writing skills.”

How do you address ethical concerns, e.g. how do the off-shore attorneys ensure confidentiality and conflict checking?

“All attorneys working for LegalEase sign confidentiality agreements. In addition, most clients require that LegalEase employees sign confidentiality agreements before commencing work on a project. Regarding conflicts of interest, we have an internal conflict checking system to ensure that we do not undertake work that would present a potential conflict of interest with another client.”

How do you guarantee client satisfaction?

“We have always provided our clients with a 100% satisfaction guarantee. If the client is for some reason dissatisfied, we only ask that they provide the reason for the dissatisfaction and give us an opportunity to re-work the project until it is to their satisfaction.”