

Martin Keyworth examines the new focus on LPO (that's Legal Process Outsourcing) and explains the critical need for legal organisations to look at new and different ways of doing business

Q: I've heard some great things about Steria particularly in the Financial Services and Public Sector arena but is LPO a new space for you?

A: Not really – more of a continuation of what we have been doing for years. As you probably know, Steria has been successfully working in the UK and Europe for the last 40 years offering an extensive range of BPO (business process outsourcing) services to clients including banks, insurance companies, retail organisations, telecoms & media companies as well as across Government and the public sector. Simply put - we help organisations manage their critical and complex functions in the most efficient way. We are currently working with a leading medical/legal organisation and are delivering significant case management services which are delivering considerable savings and efficiencies within a very strict regulatory environment.

Q: Doesn't a solicitor need to be involved in case management?

A: Surprisingly – no In the legal services space, not all aspects of the process require a solicitor to be involved at all times. Although the process needs to be administered legally (compliance), a large part of most processes is really administration, requiring rigour and attention to detail in order to ensure that all aspects are carried out highly efficiently. This is what Steria can bring to the table – our proven ability to deliver regulatory compliance – to proscribed standards and guidelines 24/7. It's what we do time after time for our existing clients – and without boasting – we are really very good at it.

Q: So does that mean that Steria wants to become a Law Firm?

A: No – we are not looking to become a law firm – (although we do employ qualified solicitors) but we do feel that we have a significant role to play in the legal process. The

legal market is opening up (following the recent 'Clementi' law ruling) and non legal organisations such as Steria are looking to help a number of legal organisations to manage the non regulatory compliance – ie the administration and paralegal aspects of case management. The market is moving rapidly in this area – and one day I think organisations such as Steria will be able to enter the legal market in their own right – but that day hasn't yet arrived.

Q: What do Steria want to be known as in the LPO sector?

A: Simply - to be the best LPO service provider in the market. To date we have made a significant investment in the re-engineering of the end-to-end case management process and have dramatically improved its efficiency and effectiveness – which obviously has significant cost benefits to our customers. We also have other significant advantages – we can deliver services from a broad variety of locations, we are technology agnostic so can work with any platform or solution and we can also leverage our considerable delivery capability to flex according to volume shifts. This means that we can transform the end-to-end supply chain for many legal processes – in much the same way that we have done for our established customers in more traditional BPO

Q: Agnostic delivery. Does that mean you don't just deliver from just India like most outsourcing companies?

A: Yes that's right. An agnostic delivery capability is fundamental to our strategy and we can deliver on almost a worldwide basis. We have centres across the whole of Europe as well as in India. Take our Polish Delivery Centre as an example. Our delivery capability is of a size, capability, sustainability and more importantly data privacy perspective to leverage our growth plans and that of our clients. I have to say that India is no longer the key location for delivery of services – there are many other locations now emerging.

Q: So you see yourselves as fundamental to the growth plans of your clients? Can Steria really say that?

A: We have a simple philosophy to be honest – based around a single word –

‘partnership’. Steria's ability to reduce operating costs, to design, transform and redesign processes interlocked by IT enablement is something that we know we can deliver. But what most organisations really want is the ability to grow their business with a "partner", who can stand shoulder to shoulder with them, sharing the risk (and the results) and giving them the ability to have an on-demand operational capability without making significant investment. And this is what we offer. We think that our partnership approach makes us unique and means we grow alongside our partners as their business develops. We are with them all the way.

Q: So are you getting much traction in the sector?

A: It's all going very well to date and we are delighted with the market response to our services. The legal sector is traditionally very risk averse and steeped in a corporate governance structure that doesn't tend to embrace holistic change. Law firms face constant regulatory change and pressure on fees – and the recent drop off in work has put them under considerable pressure. Steria's solution – offering expert LPO services with guaranteed service levels, regulatory rigour and significant (and proven) efficiency savings is a great solution to many of these issues – and one which legal companies haven't been slow to spot. We anticipate even greater take up of our services in both the short and medium term as the market becomes more familiar with LPO as a concept.

Q: How does Steria differ from other LPO providers?

A: We see ourselves as pioneers in the LPO space. Although this market is very new, we believe that we have created a solution that will enable law firms and other legal service providers to take the next 'evolutionary' leap in their development. Our ability to offer highly bespoke solutions at extremely cost effective levels is merely the starting point in LPO. We are now working on an innovative partnership strategy with key legal organisations – allowing us to constantly develop and grow our LPO offering. So all I can say is 'watch this space'

If people want to know more – they should get in touch with me directly on 01252 667236 to discuss issues in more detail or visit www.steria.co.uk/legal