

Showing the value of in-house legal teams quickly and easily.

Without easily accessible metrics, it's hard to track the performance of in-house legal teams and show their worth to the rest of the company – which is why Airways New Zealand's General Counsel Katie Bhreatnach convinced her company to bring in LawVu.

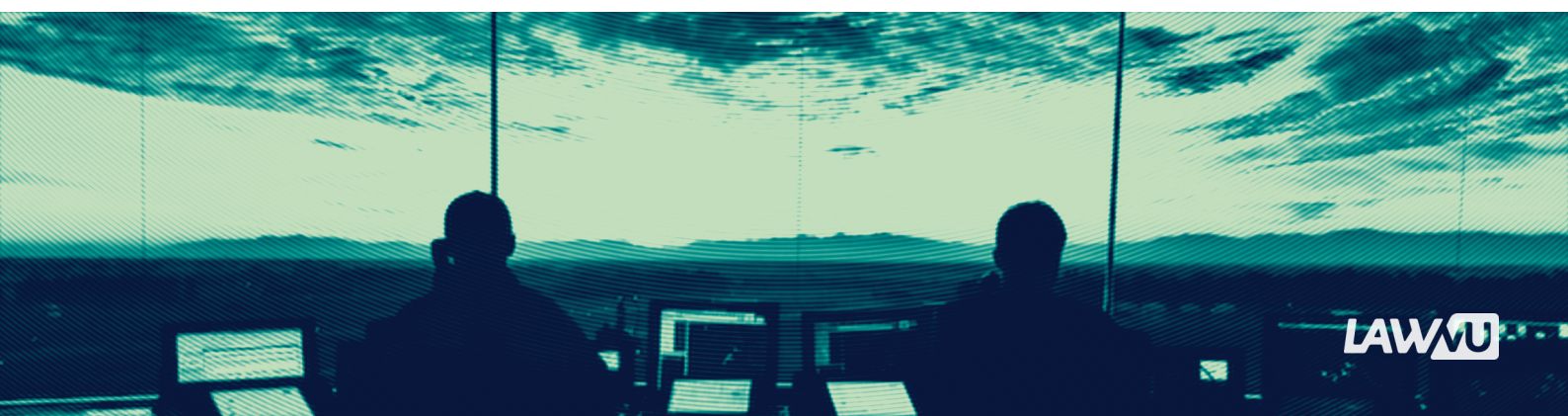
When GC Katie Bhreatnach landed her new role at Airways New Zealand in June 2019, she immediately saw the need for legal software in the in-house legal team.

“I came into Airways, having had legal technology software in my previous role, and saw that we didn't have anything and built a case to bring in the legal technology software LawVu.”

The LawVu legal software was a chance to transform the function of the in-house legal team, demonstrating the value of the legal department to

the rest of the organisation, as well as where to make improvements. “My predecessor had been in the company for many years and with her departure there was a mandate to come in and refresh the legal function. How it was operating in the organisation was very reactive and I had an opportunity to make it a different function.”

The use of legal software has played a key role in bringing the legal department alongside the rest of the business. “Part of the vision I sold to my boss, the CEO, the Executive and Board was that having the right legal technology software is a core part of a different legal function – one that is proactive, better manages workflows and increase the impact of the legal function.”





The use of LawVu's customisable dashboard metrics has also meant that her business can easily see the amount of work undertaken by the in-house legal team. "Good data and metrics which are able to demonstrate your value to the business is key. People don't realise how hard lawyers work and often the breadth of work that they do. My team has been tremendously busy during Covid and everyone can see that, I don't have to harp on about it."

Bhreatnach's team is incredibly busy – as most in-house legal teams are – and having the right metrics also means that Bhreatnach can better manage delivery expectations within the company. "The ability to use it to manage internal stakeholders – for me that's the real selling point", she says, "I have a bunch of internal stakeholders that are sometimes challenging, but the ability to have good metrics and dashboards to demonstrate the value of my team, what they're working on, the value they're adding and the efficiency, that's what actually gets buy-in to spend money on legal tech and actually demonstrates your value as a function inside your organisation."

Bhreatnach finds that one of the bigger struggles for in-house General Counsels is to get buy-in for legal software. "The big one that I hear from people is how can I get the money to invest in legal technology. Businesses will spend \$20,000 or \$30,000 on legal advice on a big crunchy issue, but not on software that manages their function better." Yet once they've bought into getting legal software, Bhreatnach has never heard of an in-house legal team that regrets the decision. "I have never heard a lawyer say that they struggle with the benefits legal technology presents them."

In order to build her case for bringing LawVu to Airways New Zealand, Bhreatnach did her research. "For me I went about it like I would for any other business matter, I build a business case which explained our problems were and how do we solve it." Bhreatnach says "When I come into an organisation, I read audit reports, I ask a lot of questions, what is legal doing well for them, what are they not doing well for them at the moment (whether real or perceived), how do I take from that to then build up a picture of why investing into a dedicated legal platform is going to solve their problem, add value or increase efficiencies."

One of the key selling points for LawVu was the ability to provide insights to the business on how efficiently the legal team was operating and the ability to easily track how matters were progressing.

Bhreatnach finds the investment in LawVu software a no-brainer, although for some in-house teams getting the budget allocation for it can be tricky. "Objectively it's not a lot of money when you look at the scheme of what you might spend for lawyers. It's more about how you go about that, a lot of people have budget for external law firms but not as much freedom on spending for other things."

Key Outcomes for Airways

- Clearly and quickly demonstrated value and role of in-house legal team
- Data-driven hiring decision-making
- Increased efficiency in performing in-house functions
- Better management of internal stakeholder expectations
- A legal function that is proactive, manages workflows better and and increases the impact of the legal function.

Still, Bhreatnach finds that investing in LawVu software is key in helping in-house legal run as efficiently as possible in this current climate. “We’re facing the biggest recession in any of our lifetimes, and with that comes an increased focus on cost and efficiency and all of that puts an increased pressure on in-house functions to do more with less.”

Bhreatnach observes. “I don’t think there are many in-house lawyers who could work twice as much as they do, so the question is how do we work more efficiently or focus on the work that is giving the most value to the organisation? Clearly technology is a key part in that because it gives you data analytics to make sometimes tough decisions around that sort of thing.”



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