

OLD SQUARE CHAMBERS ACHIEVES EFFICIENCY WITH SECURE WIRELESS SOLUTION FROM BLACKBERRY AND BERKLEY TECHNICAL SERVICES



Based in London and Bristol, Old Square is a specialist chambers with over 60 barristers (members), including 10 Queen's Counsel. Providing advocacy, advice and drafting at trial and appellate levels, Old Square prides itself on what it describes as "excellence in delivery" of high quality legal services.

At first glance, Old Square Chambers seems to epitomise an old-fashioned English barristers' chambers, but beneath the old-world exterior, Old Square has taken a very modern approach to communications.

THE CHALLENGE

Members spend the majority of their time out of chambers, in court and attending hearings across the country. Many of them hold part-time judicial positions, sit on specialist panels, serve as mediators and contribute to leading legal publications. At the centre of chambers sit the clerks, who coordinate the diaries of the members and liaise between the barristers, solicitors and courts. The key challenge was to find a solution that would enable seamless communications, access to information and appointment scheduling between the members and clerks.

THE SOLUTION

To resolve the problem, Old Square's IT committee decided they needed a mobile solution to provide email communications and scheduling – whilst providing the highest possible level of security. "Because of the nature of our work, security was at the top of our list of requirements," says William Meade, Senior Clerk at Old Square Chambers. After reviewing a variety of solutions, the BlackBerry® solution was the only one that met Old Square's security criteria. Meade says: "Security was one of the clinchers for BlackBerry, compared to other smartphone solutions."

With the assistance of Berkley Technical Services, their IT services provider and BlackBerry Alliance member, Old Square installed BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for Microsoft® Exchange and provided BlackBerry® smartphones to the barristers. Today over half the members have adopted the BlackBerry solution, as have all the clerks.

BENEFITS

**INCREASED
EFFICIENCY SAVINGS**

**RELIABLE,
SECURE SOLUTION**

**FASTER BILLING
IMPROVES CUSTOMER
SERVICE**

**UP TO THE
MINUTE SCHEDULING
EASE OF USE**

"Security was one of the clinchers for BlackBerry, compared to other smartphone solutions."

William Meade,
Senior Clerk at Old Square Chambers

THE BENEFITS

"What we were particularly excited about when moving to BlackBerry were the increased efficiency savings," says John Hendy QC, Head of Chambers. Meade has also observed that barristers and clerks are already saving time by being able to deal with their email remotely. "Sometimes barristers can be out of chambers for days at a time. With BlackBerry they can manage their email as it arrives, which saves them time when they return to chambers." He adds, "In the old days we'd leave a message on their mobile but wouldn't be sure they got it, or call the court and try to get a message to them via the court usher. With the BlackBerry solution, we can just send them an email and they can reply with instructions."

Within days of making the BlackBerry solution available to members, over half of them had adopted it, even some of the more technophobic members. Although all new users are eligible for a short training class, many of them forgo it as they find the BlackBerry smartphone very intuitive and self-explanatory.

To solve the scheduling issues, Old Square is upgrading to the latest version of Meridian Law, a software system used by 95% of UK chambers to manage the workload and time reporting of barristers. "Clerks have primary responsibility for the barristers' diaries, which are updated on a minute by minute basis. Even if the barrister takes a print-out with them on Monday morning, it's out of date by the afternoon," explains Meade. "With the upgrade, the barristers see and manage their diary on their BlackBerry smartphones. They are able to see their dates in court and other appointments without having to telephone their clerk in chambers."

The success of the BlackBerry solution for email and diary management has prompted Old Square Chambers to begin using the BlackBerry solution for time logging, again with Meridian Law. "At the moment, members record time in an email or note it on slips of paper, which then have to be re-inputted by clerks," explains Hendy. "Using the new Meridian Law system and BlackBerry smartphones, barristers will be able to use their downtime, when travelling for example, to log their time immediately after an appointment. Clerks are able to bill time faster and the barristers will no longer use billable time for timesheet administration." Meade and Hendy are convinced that the BlackBerry solution will continue to make Old Square Chambers more efficient, by bringing an essential core function of its workflow into the 21st century. Most importantly of all, the BlackBerry solution has enabled the Chambers to ensure the firm's "excellence in delivery" in today's highly connected world.

For further information: www.blackberry.com/go/success

**BLACKBERRY CASE STUDY
OLD SQUARE CHAMBERS**

