



Taking the meaning of partnership to a new level

Eversheds boosts collaboration and competitive advantage by working more closely with strategic IT services provider

Every CIO will readily admit that their team is critical to their success. But it is rare for IT suppliers and service providers to be included in this line-up – despite the strategic role they often play in today's IT organisations.

Eversheds CIO Paul Caris, however, has no qualms in recognising the part that IT suppliers play in making him, his IT department and the law firm a success.

“For a CIO to be successful, they must choose good partners, and bring them as close as possible to the organisation,” he says. “Many organisations claim to have a ‘partnership’ with their IT vendors, but to truly achieve this, you must collaborate with suppliers as though they are part of your own organisation and give them similar levels of access and attention.”

Paul has taken just such an approach with IT solutions and services provider Computacenter, which has a five-year managed services contract with the international law firm, which employs 3,500 people.

ALTERNATIVE CV:

The Computacenter and Eversheds partnership

Overview: An IT managed services contract encompassing onsite service desk, offsite datacentre hosting facilities and transformational projects

Value: £27 million over five years

What makes it special: A Computacenter representative has been appointed to Eversheds' senior IT team and given exclusive access to the IT pipeline and other information.

Success factors: Greater transparency, increased collaboration, simplified innovation

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Closing the client/supplier gap

Soon after joining Eversheds as CIO in February 2009, Paul invited Computacenter to become part of the firm's internal IT leadership team. “It was important we appointed a Computacenter representative that was service and not sales driven,” comments Paul.

This representative is Mark Hall, a Computacenter Service Delivery Manager, who has worked on the Eversheds' team since the agreement was signed in December 2006. “By engaging directly with Eversheds' senior team, I can deal with issues faster and ensure that we are meeting the terms of the original contract in respect of both service levels and cost savings,” comments Mark.

Although meeting contractual obligations is important, one of the drivers behind Computacenter's appointment is to help the relationship extend beyond the letter of a signed agreement. As Paul explains, “By establishing accountable relationships and working together more closely, companies can be more pragmatic about how they interpret a contract. We consult with Computacenter on most technology decisions and problems — even if they are not going to be the future supplier.”



Computacenter also has privileged access to the law firm's IT pipeline, so it can match relevant services and solutions to Eversheds' future business needs. According to Paul this helps to minimise the need for expensive RFPs and investment in development activities.

Innovating for the future

Given Eversheds' reputation for IT innovation and the strategic role that technology plays in delivering client-facing services, providing value for money and complexity associated with new projects is key.

Eversheds is one of the largest full services law firms, with 3,500 people and 47 offices in 29 jurisdictions throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Elearning, Deeds Online and GAMS (Evershed's Global Account Management System) are just some examples of how Eversheds is driving its business forward through technology to transform the way legal services are delivered to corporate clients.
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Paul's approach to supplier management is equally ground-breaking. As Simon Walsh, Computacenter's Managing Director confirms, "This is the first time we have been asked to join a customer's IT leadership team. By fostering a straightforward and honest relationship, transparency and collaboration, companies can transcend the traditional supplier/client relationship to establish a mutually rewarding partnership."

For Eversheds, Paul believes the benefits will include:

- Access to more skills
- More cost-effective services
- Infectious positive relationship
- Opportunity to influence suppliers' strategy.

Although cost is a key factor, the partnership between Computacenter and Eversheds is more about quality and innovating to provide a high quality legal expertise rather than still providing value for money.

"Although we need to contain costs, we also want to ensure IT remains agile so we can respond rapidly to change and make it easier for the business to engage with us," comments

Paul. "By working more closely with Computacenter, we can develop and deploy better solutions for our lawyers and clients, which is key to our strategy as an international law firm for the 21st century."

About Computacenter

Computacenter is Europe's leading independent provider of IT infrastructure services. We can advise customers on their IT strategy, implement the most appropriate technology from a wide range of leading vendors and manage their technology infrastructures on their behalf. At every stage we make our customers' businesses sharper by removing cost, complexity and barriers to change across their IT infrastructures. Our corporate and government clients are served by offices across the UK, Germany, France, the Benelux countries, Spain and South Africa. We also serve our customers' global requirements through our extensive partner network.

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