



WITH SCALABLE DOCUMENT AUTOMATION, LARGE LAW FIRM EASES UPGRADES, BOOSTS PRODUCTIVITY

PROFILE

Founded in 1946, Blank Rome employs more than 500 attorneys and 600 other professionals in its 11 offices in the United States and China. The firm has received multiple awards for its counsel in practices that range from governmental relations to intellectual property to maritime law and more.

SITUATION

Because of its tendency to take a “forklift” approach to IT upgrades, Blank Rome needs reliable, flexible, and highly compatible document automation tools.

SOLUTION

Since 2003, Blank Rome has relied on Innova™, from Litéra®, for numbering schemes and templates.

BENEFITS

- Ease of sharing and managing access to templates among multiple offices
- Minimized costs for external programming and training
- Users supported in a reliable and consistent environment
- Firm well-positioned to adopt emerging technologies

PRODUCTS



The Philadelphia-based law firm of Blank Rome has served its clients with distinction for over 65 years. To help do this, the firm depends on Innova™, the reliable, high-performance document creation and automation platform from Litéra® for numbering schemes and templates. Through Innova and a strong partnership with Litéra, Blank Rome keeps programming and training costs down and user productivity up, and has the support it needs to make the most of emerging application technologies.

SITUATION

Founded in 1946 and based in Philadelphia, Blank Rome serves clients that range from startup entities to Fortune 500 corporations. Included among the AmLaw 100, Blank Rome employs 500 attorneys who work from 11 offices in the United States and China. Among recent plaudits, Blank Rome was named “2013 Law Firm of the Year” by U.S. News and World Report for both family law and maritime law, and its attorneys were ranked among “America’s Leading Lawyers for Business” by Chambers USA in 12 separate categories.

When it comes to computing practices, Blank Rome has been an early adopter of several technologies, including Microsoft SharePoint for collaboration and server virtualization. But its approach to desktop upgrades is more measured. Because of the need to maintain a consistent and predictable environment for more than 1,100 employees in offices that span 13 time zones, the firm prefers to upgrade everything at once—hardware, software, network, operating systems, and applications all at all levels.

This “forklift” approach minimizes the frequency of disruptions to users and their time-sensitive work for clients, a significant advantage at an organization like Blank Rome. But it also means that when the firm moves to a new version of Microsoft Office, for example, all the applications that work closely with that product must be compatible with the newer version—in their existing form, in a new release designed to work with the newer version of Office, or in a release that the vendor can make rapidly available as needed.

Tools for document automation illustrate the challenge perhaps better than any other, explains Larry Liss, Chief Technology Officer at Blank Rome. “Document automation

tools are absolutely central to the work we do,” he says. “At the same time, their close interoperation with Microsoft Office makes them particularly vulnerable to compatibility problems when we do an Office upgrade.”

SOLUTION

For this reason, Liss considers it fortunate that some years back the firm implemented a solution for numbering schemes and templates that has proved resistant to such problems: Innova, the document automation platform from Litéra. At Blank Rome, attorneys and staff use Innova to develop, manage, and standardize numbering schemes, templates, and tables of contents and to reduce the risk of copying inappropriate information from repurposed documents. The firm has been using the product since 2003, before it became part of the Litéra product family through a 2009 acquisition, and has moved to a new release only once since then.

According to Liss, this speaks both to the firm’s overall satisfaction with Innova and to the product’s flexibility.

“Just shortly after Innova became a Litéra product, we moved to a Windows Server 2008 64-bit environment with Microsoft Exchange 2010, Windows 7, and Microsoft Office 2007,” Liss explains. “In preparation for that technology refresh, we evaluated competing products for numbering and templates, a common practice no matter what the application. But most users wanted to stay with Innova, as they were happy with its functionality and preferred its user interface.”

During the refresh, the firm’s engineers also found something to like about Innova. “That refresh affected nearly all of our key software components,” Liss reports. “But for the most part, Innova ran smoothly through it, requiring only a limited release update, which Litéra was able to provide.”

“Among all the vendors we have worked with, none has provided better support than Litéra.”

Larry Liss
Chief Technology Officer
Blank Rome

BENEFITS

Liss calls Innova “a fundamental part of the way we work,” not only because of what the product does for the firm’s attorneys and other professionals, but also because of the powerful partnership between Blank Rome and Litéra. With the product and the partnership, Blank Rome has minimized programming and training costs, helped users work more productively, and positioned itself for ongoing improvements of its application environment.

Programming dollars saved

One thing that Liss particularly likes about Innova is its enterprise-grade architecture, with database connections for multiple offices stored in a central, consolidated configuration file.

“This enables us to share templates globally without having to redo them in each location and to manage template access according to a user’s location and security group,” Liss says. “We can make engineers’ and administrators’ jobs easier and avoid the costs of having to engage outside programmers.”

User morale and productivity

Liss reports that with Innova, the attorneys and staff at Blank Rome have a solution that not only runs smoothly through upgrades, but also supports their day-to-day work consistently, reliably, and intuitively. “Innova integrates so cleanly with Microsoft Word that new users rarely need training,” he says. “That saves us money on instructional resources and minimizes the time that schedule-pressed legal professionals need to spend in the classroom.”

With Innova, attorneys and staff at all levels can also maintain high levels of productivity. “In a legal environment, a numbering schemes and template solution has to work

pretty much perfectly,” Liss points out. “From what users tell me, Innova does.”

On the rare occasion that users do face an issue, it is resolved right away. “In the past two years, only once did we have to escalate an issue with Innova, and it was resolved that same day,” Liss says. “Among all the vendors we have worked with, none has provided better support than Litéra.”

Support for continuous improvement

One component of that support is the solid relationship that Litéra enjoys with Microsoft. This enables Litéra to ensure ongoing compatibility between its products and those from Microsoft. And that makes a big difference for Blank Rome.

“As a Gold Certified Microsoft ISV and member of the Microsoft Technology Adoption Program, Litéra is well positioned to help us stay aligned with emerging technologies,” Liss explains, noting that the firm’s next desktop refresh may also include Litéra IDS to support collaboration among geographically dispersed practice groups. “Whatever our future plans or needs, we’re confident Litéra will be there.”

For more information on Blank Rome, visit: www.blankrome.com

For more information on Innova and other products from Litéra, visit: www.litera.com

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