How Salazar Law Uses Legaltech to Take on Big Law

Salazar Law Leverages ROSS to Drive Efficiency and ROI for the Firm, and Value for its Clients
In Search of a Modernized Law Firm

After spending nearly 13 years at Greenberg Traurig, Luis Salazar came to the conclusion that the legal industry needed to abandon its ivory tower business model and replace it with one that respects its clients’ expertise and values. Costs were too high, answers were too long in coming, and clients were expected to pay for work that was often redundant. Things had to change.

“Our clients were increasingly cost conscious, demanding greater efficiency, by which they often meant lower fees, and predictable efficiency, such as flat fees or project-based fees,” explained Mr. Salazar. “On a very deep level, I believed these were legitimate concerns, and that to meet them, our industry needed to adopt a smart, lean and tech-savvy approach to legal work. Yet Big Law seemed intent on maintaining the status quo.”

1 Greenberg Traurig is an international law firm founded in South Florida, now comprising over 2,000 attorneys in 38 offices around the world.

To Make a Difference Break a Mold

In 2010, Mr. Salazar left Greenberg Traurig to start his own firm, Salazar Law. His firm represents clients facing complex commercial litigation and financial issues (bankruptcy, Chapter 11, debtor-side representation, corporate restructuring) government investigations and cyber security – and represents the exact same types of clients on the same “bet-the-company” litigation that Mr. Salazar handled while in Big Law.

He was determined to break the mold of Big Law. His goal was to create a firm that was small, agile, and most importantly, adept at leveraging technology to deliver superior products, quicker, faster, and better. He set a goal of keeping the number of lawyers at his firm under a dozen.

“Nearly every other industry uses technology...
to drive efficiency, and it was time to question traditional legal practices. I wanted to establish a firm that quickly identifies the value clients want and delivers that value as quickly and powerfully as possible. I was determined to use as much modern technology as possible,” he said.

**Delivering Efficiency Through New Technology**

From the beginning, Salazar Law focused on streamlining workflows. They moved all of their work to the cloud, and implemented state of the art internal communication and work flow management tools. They also adopted ROSS, a legal research tool that uses artificial intelligence to home in on relevant passages of law from case law, as well as understand the context of queries, and highlight additional parts of a case that may be helpful to the lawyer’s query.

“What intrigued me about ROSS was the way it harnessed artificial intelligence. The market had plenty of access points for information, but it needed a tool that could cut through all those piles of information to help us be more efficient at getting to the answers. ROSS quickly became an integral component to our pursuit of efficiency. In fact, it simultaneously became an integral component of our marketing because adopting cutting edge technology to work smarter, faster and more powerfully is something the clients, especially general counsel, are very interested in.”

**Competing and Winning Against Big Law**

Business clients quickly saw the benefits of working with Salazar Law: ROSS helps Salazar Law respond to opposing counsel faster, and cuts down the time it takes to get the precise answers they need to win cases. As their successes piled up, more clients signed on.

“We do the same sophisticated work that I did
at Greenberg Traurig. We compete against Big Law to get that work, and we compete against them in the actual matters themselves.”

Driving Profitability Through Efficiency

Because ROSS lets Salazar Law quickly find the most relevant case law for the clients, they have no need to support a dedicated research team.

“ROSS is so highly intuitive and easy to use that we were able to introduce it into our workflow seamlessly. Right away that led to a healthy and productive re-evaluation of how we approached legal research at the firm,” explained Mr. Salazar.

And now that research eats up a much smaller portion of the project fees Salazar Law charges clients, the ROI on individual projects is higher, and so is client satisfaction.

Thanks to its intuitive interface, Salazar Law attorneys face no barriers to jumping into ROSS to ask questions. They no longer needed to block off time in order to set up the research, which meant they actually spent more time doing real research, rather than using up that time to set up their queries. “It’s like going from a rotary phone to an iPhone,” said Mr. Salazar.

Summary

- Quickly discover regional, relevant case law.
- Refocus attorneys’ hours from research to client support.
- Develop organization-wide learnings and expertise that provide broader applications beyond your practice group.