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PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

INNOVATION AWARDS



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Q&A **What are some of the firm's most satisfying successes of the past year and why?** Our continued investment in technology innovation is a tremendous success in and of itself. There's a collective spirit of innovation across the firm, and it shows. On one hand, it's visible in the partners' investment in our Immigration Technology Innovation Lab, and on the other, in the 1,000+ ideas that our colleagues around the world submitted to our Fragomen Product Ideas tool in recent months.

Over the past year, our lab has piloted one of our latest innovations and is developing it for use by the wider firm—the Mail Processing Operations Center (MPOC). The MPOC uses a scanning and optical character recognition



(OCR) data capture solution to help us provide immigration services more efficiently. Once government mail is scanned in the MPOC, the software captures the document image and key data points, updates our case management system accordingly and notifies the legal team. In the pilot, this technology reduced the turnaround time for processing mail and updating our case management system by 80%, enabling the legal team to better focus their time on providing strategic guidance to the client.

The impact will be that much greater once the system is implemented firm-wide, as we will be able to leverage the vast amount of data we gather to provide clients with predictive insights (e.g., data that shows how quickly U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is processing cases). This practical guidance will enable clients to pinpoint how quickly they can get their foreign nationals where and when they need them, ultimately ensuring the continued success of their business.

What, if any, boundaries stood in the way of the firm's innovative accomplishment, and how were they surmounted? We have a large and incredibly diverse client base that spans many industries and includes everything ranging from individuals and start-ups to Fortune 100 companies. This presents us with a challenge, albeit a good one, because our technological innovations must meet the needs of

so many different kinds of clients. They need to be flexible enough to cater to the distinct needs of individual clients, but standardized enough so that they are scalable worldwide.

To strike that balance, we collect feedback from all types of clients when considering product developments, and we provide clients with several means of doing so, including through a feedback mechanism on our case management system and mobile app, 24x7 global support desk and inviting clients to visit the lab for one-on-one meetings. Our User Experience Design team also interviews and surveys hundreds of client stakeholders and employees to inform the development of technologies. We then align that feedback with our Standard Operating Model principles before we proceed with any enterprise-wide developments.

We also collaborate daily with other internal groups to ensure that our technology aligns with the diverse geographical needs of our clients, including our Knowledge team, which maintains a proprietary database of information on immigration processes, red flag issues and other information relevant to immigration compliance around the world. We build this knowledge into our technology, so our case management system promotes compliance with local requirements in each destination country.

What is the best advice for younger attorneys looking to advance their own innovative ideas or visions? The innovative ideas that have the greatest chances of execution are those that 1) have a clear value proposition and 2) engage the relevant stakeholders. For the first point, you need to articulate the tangible value that the idea brings to the table (e.g., cost and/or time savings) and how many people it will impact. For the second, you need to understand where your idea fits into the company's roadmap and make sure that you have engaged an advocate who can help you bring the idea to the right people.