

# Speeding a Post-Acquisition Data Conversion

## Wilson Performs a Quick Migration for Drinker Biddle & Reath

### PROJECT SUMMARY

#### Company

**Name:** Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

**Headquarters:** Philadelphia, PA

**Services:** Corporate law, securities law, complex litigation, and other legal services

**Employees:** 700 attorneys located in 12 offices

**Website:** www.drinkerbiddle.com

#### Business Situation

- Acquisition of lawyers from the firm of Reish & Reicher in Los Angeles

#### Technical Situation

- Extract timekeeper numbers, client matters, and conflicts from ProLaw database
- Convert data to be compatible with Elite Enterprise database configuration
- Map data and automate exception handling
- Perform migration in short time window

#### Why Wilson Legal Solutions

- Positive prior experience with firm
- Broad knowledge of database logic
- Caliber of technical staff
- Extensive experience performing data conversions
- Able to handle both data extraction and loading into Elite

#### Project Overview

- Mapped data from ProLaw to Elite
- Wrote conversion programs
- Performed load testing in test environment
- Validated the data conversion
- Migrated data into live production environment

#### Highlights

- Performed conversion on time and without issues
- Enabled all timekeepers to record work from day one
- Kept momentum going so document management system could be converted in a timely manner
- Identified potential mapping issues early to avoid delays later

Since its founding in 1849, Philadelphia-based Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP has upheld an unwavering commitment to excellence in the practice of law and public service. The firm has a rich history with many key institutions, building a strong foundation to support its growth and enabling it to become a leading law firm with a national footprint.

The character and drive that has sustained the firm for more than 160 years continues today as the firm grows through mergers and acquisition. But while growth through acquisition can be a fine business strategy, it sometimes creates challenges from a technology standpoint.

As case in point, in March 2011, Drinker Biddle added lawyers from the Reish & Reicher law firm in Los Angeles to its roster, including Reish & Reicher's nationally renowned employee benefits and compensation practice. But because both firms used different practice management software, one of the first steps required in bringing the lawyers on board was converting Reish & Reicher's data so it would be compatible with Drinker Biddle's software.

### Migrating ProLaw Data into Elite Enterprise

Reish & Reicher used ProLaw software while Drinker Biddle uses Elite Enterprise software. Before the new lawyers could enter time to bill for their work, data had to be extracted from ProLaw and mapped into Drinker Biddle's database. "We were working under a tight deadline so the lawyers could start entering time on their first day with our firm," says Debbie Shugart, Drinker Biddle's financial systems manager. "We had to quickly extract timekeeper num-



*"We finished both the test and live data conversion. Wilson Legal Solutions was completely dedicated to the project, and the attention to detail was awesome. The conversion was smooth and on time, and the data was perfect."*

Debbie Shugart  
Financial Systems Manager  
Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP

bers, client matters, and conflicts and then load the data into our databases." Ancillary software systems depended on this data, so it was essential that the conversion and migration ran smoothly.

### Choosing Wilson Legal Solutions

Three weeks before the acquisition was final, Drinker Biddle began the process. In choosing a software services partner to help with the conversion, the firm

looked no further than Wilson Legal Solutions. "I had worked with the team at Wilson Legal Solutions many times in the past, so I knew I could trust them to do a good job," Shugart explains. "Wilson's team not only understands Elite databases but also all of the tables in other databases. That helps speed the conversion process because they know before the project begins how to set up the data maps."

### **Mapping Data from ProLaw to Elite**

One of the first steps in the conversion was to extract all of the client matters from the ProLaw database and evaluate potential conflict issues with Drinker Biddle's Elite software. Once the conflicts were resolved, data mapping began. "We performed the conversion in two phases. First, we mapped the data and then ran the conversion in a test environment," Shugart says. "We validated the results and made corrections if the data didn't map accurately."

Wilson Legal Solutions' data specialist wrote the scripts to automate the conversion and handle any exceptions

in the two databases. "We had to script the database logic," Shugart adds. "For example, if there are three attorneys on a matter in the Elite database, but only one is listed in the ProLaw database, we used a script to determine how to populate those fields."

### **Loading the Data into the Elite Software**

Once the data was mapped, tested, and validated, Drinker Biddle was able to run the full conversion. "There were no issues. We met the timeline and converted 3,700 clients and 5,000 matters so everyone could begin working on day one," Shugart says.

With the data conversion complete, Drinker Biddle could begin using the data in its broader software environment. "Our IS department relies on a document management system that is tied to our billing system," Shugart explains. "Before we could create and convert documents, all of the clients and matters had to be uploaded into the software. So it was important that the conversion run quickly and correctly."

### **Leveraging Data for Deeper Insight**

Now that Drinker Biddle has all of its data and documents up to date, the firm plans to focus on how it uses the data. "Our next step is to strengthen our business intelligence functionality so we can access and analyze our data more quickly," Shugart says. "Wilson Legal Solutions is expert in this area, so we feel lucky to have them practically in our backyard here in Philadelphia."



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