

## LTN AWARDS

# Give Us Your Best

## Most Innovative Law Firm

The largest law firms are getting larger — in fact, according to ALM's *The National Law Journal*, the average size of the Top 250 firms has grown by 70 percent in the last decade. With more lawyers and support staff, it is increasingly challenging to assure that the right people are working on the right projects for clients.

Goodwin Procter is this year's law firm winner because it has found a way to better manage its growth. The bi-coastal firm — now with 850 lawyers working in four West coast and three East coast offices — needed to streamline client work assignments in order to match lawyers and support staff to the most appropriate work. Critical information was often scattered in several data silos, and only accessible via a patchwork information system that relied heavily on Microsoft Corp.'s Excel spreadsheets and Word documents.

In 2006, Goodwin Procter's IT professionals developed iStaff, a web-based staffing management program that helps firm managers analyze current projects and assign lawyers based on a variety of facets, including availability, expertise, and career goals. Today, all staffing requests are entered into a common system, where information about current needs across the entire firm can be accessed at a glance. The centralized database simplifies placement, because the information can be sorted any number of ways to find the best possible match.

Managers can restrict searches based on specific criteria, such as current workload, specific skills or professional development priorities. The iStaff system integrates with other firm databases. "With the click of a mouse, staffing managers can view attorney billing history, current client work, vacation calendars, or a detailed profile page for that attorney," says CIO Peter Lane, right. "Prior to iStaff, this information was housed in disparate systems or sometimes not available at all."

Lawyers can use the system to cite specific areas of law they would like to work on, or particular partners they would like to work with, explains Lane.

The system, he says, "also promotes knowledge management and collaboration among the staffing managers, through a centralized notes repository." In addition to sharing relevant information, managers can use the available reporting function to craft reports of staffing assignment data, based on customizable criteria.

The IT department's custom work has highlighted the value it provides to the firm's business needs. Lawyers interact with iStaff directly, eliminating the need for cumbersome extraction of data from multiple sources by administrative staff.

A true test of success, Goodwin Procter increased staffing assignments by 63 percent in the first six months of operation without having to increase staff.

As firms become increasingly complex organizations, new opportunities will arise for dealing with those changes. For Goodwin Procter, iStaff is a creative answer to the fundamental problem of matching resources and client needs.

### The Jury

The six winners were selected by an independent panel of three judges, all members of the LTN Editorial Advisory Board: Andrew Adkins III, director of the Legal Technology Institute at the University of Florida Levin College of Law; Fredric Lederer, law professor and director of the Courtroom 21 Project at the College of William and Mary School of Law; and David Whelan, Manager, Legal Information, at the Law Society of Upper Canada.



Photograph by Russ Curtis.

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*This is an excerpt from "Give Us Your Best," by David Whelan, about the winners of the 2007 LTN Awards competition, which appears in the March 2008 issue of Law Technology News. To see the full article, please visit [www.lawtechnologynews.com](http://www.lawtechnologynews.com).*

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Goodwin Procter LLP is one of the nation's leading law firms with more than 850 attorneys in offices in Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Diego, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, and Washington, D.C. The firm's core areas of practice are corporate, litigation and real estate, with specialized areas of focus that include financial services, private equity, technology, REITs and real estate capital markets, intellectual property, tax and products liability.

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