

THE O SHAPED LAWYER®



*Putting People and
Relationships at
the heart of the
legal profession*

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THE O SHAPED
LAWYER

PILOTS
REPORT



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The O Shaped Lawyer

We interviewed 18 leading General Counsel in the UK.

Our research showed that General Counsel want to work with lawyers who are capable of building great relationships with them, are adaptable to their changing needs and are able to create value for their businesses.

Building Relationships



Creating Value



Being Adaptable



“ *I want to work with someone who is willing to learn about my business - and I'm happy to teach them* ”

GC FTSE 350



Bringing 'The O' to Life

“

I want someone who understands my business. I understand this is hard but I am willing to invest

”

GC FTSE 350

Over the last 3 years, we have met with dozens of in-house leaders and seen an appetite for more collaborative relationships with law firms.

Despite this, law firms and their clients remain misaligned in their purpose, incentives and measures of success.

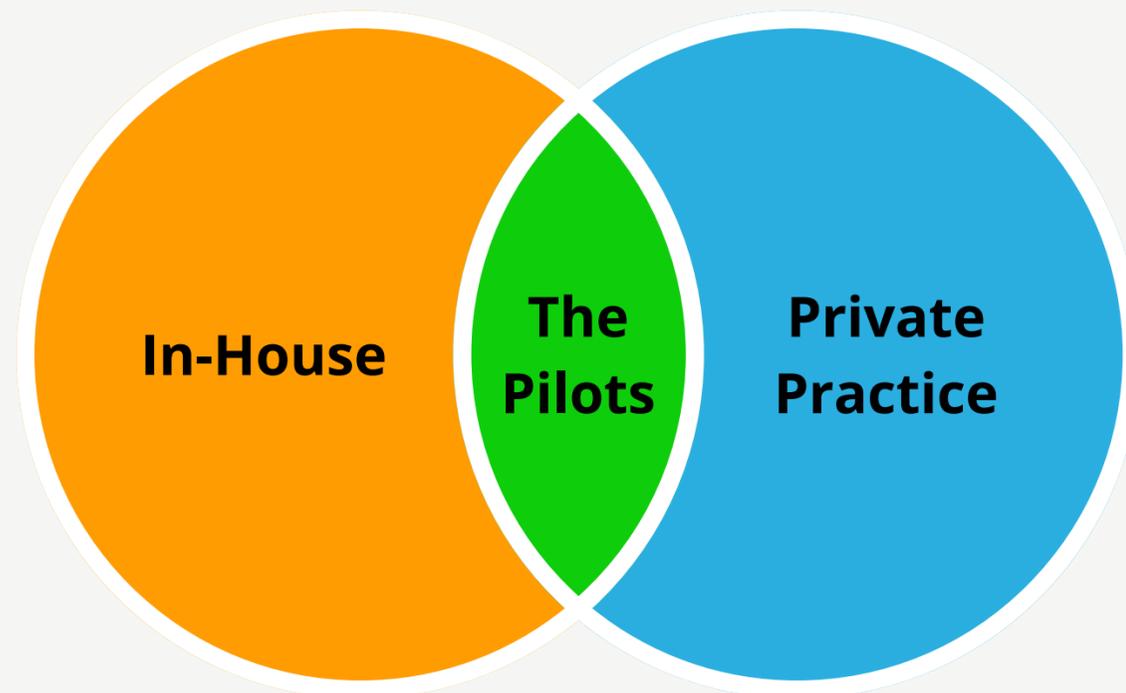
It's why we tested the attributes in the O Shaped Lawyer pilots which demonstrated that, with the right environment and investment of time, in-house and private practice can work much closer together and increase their value proposition to their joint customer.

The O Shaped Pilots



Over the course of a year we conducted 7 real-time, practical O Shaped Lawyer Pilots with some of the most progressive in-house and private practice teams in the country.

The pilots gave the teams time and space to explore how they could be most aligned to create a 'one team' approach that provides the business customer with the best possible legal service.



The Pilot Participants

centrica

DAC BEACHCROFT

CAPITA

CBRE

DENTONS

**ADDLESHAW
GODDARD**

Pinsent Masons

DLA PIPER

NetworkRail

NatWest

**EVERSHEDS
SUTHERLAND**



Building Relationships

Key themes from the pilots on BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS included:

- The need to create a level playing field between in-house and external lawyers - a 'one team' approach.
- Many existing relationships were largely transactional. It takes time, effort and patience to build high trust relationships.
- The creation of a psychologically safe environment was critical for building trust and led to a much more inclusive experience for the participants.

“

I was surprised just how little we knew about each other and our businesses, even where there was a prior relationship

pilot participant

”

Building Relationships

A selection of the comments and themes that came from the pilot groups discussing the BUILDING RELATIONSHIP skills of empathy, communication, collaboration and influence.

O Shaped

A one team approach

High level of trust

Empathetic and honest approach

Inclusive environment

Prepared to be vulnerable

Developing

Confident to ask questions

Learning about different cultures

Sharing ideas and data

Building relationships that drive open discussions

Its all about humanising the client

Traditional

Very transactional

Operate in siloes

Too busy to invest time

Fear of failure or looking silly

No shared success or recognition



Creating Value

Key themes from the pilots on CREATING VALUE included:

- Different understanding between private practice and in-house about what value means and to whom.
- The need to involve the end user of legal services. The sessions where business colleagues were invited in were widely regarded as the most powerful.
- Talking the customers language, particularly when it comes to pragmatism around identifying risks and priorities.
- Incremental improvements are still valuable and can have a significant impact.

What Business Colleagues Said

- No distinction between in-house and external lawyers
- Language is so important
- Understand the business and its priorities
- Don't need to know all the risks and all the detail
- Clear recommendations are essential
- Transparency and certainty of costs are critical



Creating Value

"You really need to understand the client to understand how to add value"
Pilot participant

A selection of the comments and themes that came from the pilot groups discussing CREATING VALUE skills of identify the opportunities, solve the problems, synthesise and simplify complexities.

Traditional



Not clear who is doing what

Can't advise without all the information

Not capturing lessons learned

Don't have time to focus on added value



Developing



Imperfect action is better than none

Making decisions, not sitting on the fence

4 pages is almost always too long

Expectations being managed



O Shaped



Comfortable with doubt

Innovation is integral to every piece of work

Clear and agreed on what value means

Focus on priorities - what is actually needed



Being Adaptable

Key themes from the pilots on BEING ADAPTABLE included:

- Fear of failure and imposter syndrome are present in all lawyers, regardless of experience and this is a barrier to innovation.
- Lawyers are traditionally time poor – with the right focus and prioritisation, time can be created for things that really matter.
- Feedback isn't routinely sought, but where participants made the effort, the benefits were clear.
- Leadership plays a key role in modelling the attributes and creating the safe space for their teams to learn and grow.

“

Listening to more senior colleagues describe the personal challenges that they continued to face to maintain high standards, despite years of experience, gave me confidence in what I am doing

”

pilot participant



Being Adaptable

“Feedback drives a continuous improvement culture”

Pilot participant

A selection of the comments and themes that came from the pilot groups discussing BEING ADAPTABLE skills of courage, resilience, feedback and continuous learning.

Traditional

Developing

O Shaped

Perfectionism stifles progress

Resilience is about long hours

Passive leadership

Fear of making mistakes

Expect the unexpected

Feedback in real time

Exploring new ways of working

Stepping out of comfort zone

Well-being is top of the agenda

Leaders set the tone from the top

Culture of regular 360 feedback

Seeing failure in a positive light



The Quick Wins

“small adjustments to our every day working can have a big and positive impact”

Pilot participant

Building Relationships

Reflecting on language in legal letters, particularly where the audience aren't lawyers

Inviting the other team into team meetings

Annual celebration between the teams with O Shaped Awards ceremony

Increasing joint events to focus on key issues such as D&I/ESG/well-being

Feeding into each others' performance reviews

Visibility on each others' goals and strategies

Creating Value

Create a bank of customer focussed templates for the in-house team

KPIs that are referred to at the beginning, middle and end of each matter

Bring in the end-user voice more to understand value

Identify inefficiencies in service delivery to keep fees down

Share processes, initiatives and new technologies that are offered to other clients

Define roles and expectations before transactions

Being Adaptable

Have the courage to produce work that is 80% of the way there, not seeking perfection

Encourage a feedback culture internally and set feedback targets

Taking small steps out of comfort zones, such as public speaking

Joint training sessions – technical and business skills

Work with talent and recruitment teams to ensure OSL attributes are covered for new hires

Review all capability frameworks to reflect O Shaped Attributes

MEASURING THE IMPACT - A CASE STUDY

TOP 20 LAW FIRM AND FTSE 250 CLIENT

Teams of different experience levels from law firm and client held 14 x1.5 hour sessions together to embed the O Shaped Attributes as part of their day to day relationship.

Working through the three buckets of skills (Building Relationships, Creating Value and Being Adaptable), the group openly and proactively explored areas they could improve their service to the end-user.

With the support of Pirical, the HR data analytics experts, measurements of performance were taken ahead of each session. Table 1 illustrates the impact of the pilot. Across all three areas, there was a significant improvement in awareness and skills development for the participants.

Outputs from the pilot that will feature as part of the relationship going forward include:

- Regular post transactions reviews and feedback sessions
- Encouraging joint meetings
- Joint training sessions, both technical and business skills
- More social events
- Peer to peer mentoring programmes



THE IMPROVEMENTS ARE MEASURABLE

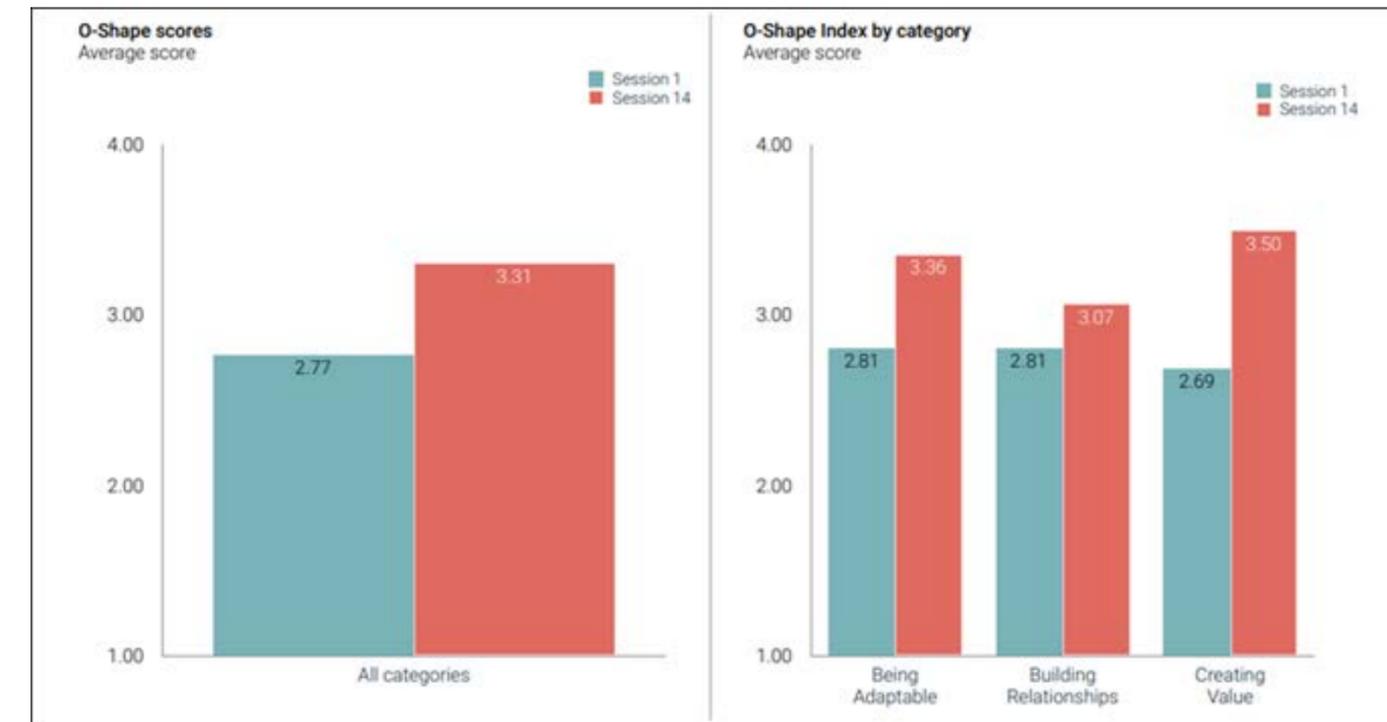


Table 1

"Its a programme that helps you become a more rounded lawyer, a more rounded professional"
Client Pilot Participant

"It's an opportunity to get an insight into the client and what they consider as value"
Law firm Pilot Participant

The Wall of Testimony

"It has given us the time and space to properly connect and engage to share with each other and experiment with our ideas"

"Gave me the opportunity to be a better lawyer"

"The programme has helped to develop our relationships as a pilot group and will help us develop really good long-term relationships"

"I am a better colleague"

"Through the programme I've learnt that we all have the same desire to exceed our customers' expectations, and that we face the same obstacles to achieving that goal"

"THE EXPERIENCE HAS REALLY CONSOLIDATED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 'ONE TEAM' RELATIONSHIP"

"A great platform for open discussion and challenge with the ultimate aim of putting our collective customers first"

"It's been something that's been both informative and empowering"

What Next?

The pilots were a huge success, but for the O to have an industry-wide impact it needs to evolve. Those who experienced it have gained massively, but the benefits of the pilots on both personal, team and client development have to reach a wider audience.

Taking the learnings from the pilots and the growing interest in working in an O Shaped way, the O Shaped Lawyer has developed the 100 Day Programme where lawyers and business services professionals from private practice and in-house will work together in a way that builds on the success of the pilots.

This inclusive programme will take participants through the O Shaped Attributes in a practical, immersive way that will lead to stronger teams, more sustainable relationships and ultimately an enhanced customer experience.

For more information on the O Shaped Lawyer 100 Day Programme™ and how it can help you to build stronger client and customer relationships, please contact us at info@oshapedlawyer.com

The Final Word

In a post COVID world, the focus on and development of human centric skills is more important than ever. The O Shaped Pilots have demonstrated that there is a new way of working in the legal profession that can enable individuals, teams and relationships to thrive in a complex, uncertain world.

For those law firms and in-house teams who want to attract the right talent, engage their people and ultimately enhance their customer experience, embedding an O Shaped mindset as part of their DNA and adopting the O Shaped attributes will be a key differentiator. For successful teams, it will no longer be a nice to have but a necessity.

In a statement that could be applied much wider across the profession, one pilot participant said:

"I was a sceptic, but now I am a convert"

Its time for sceptics across the profession to show courage and acknowledge that they too could be converts.

“

[The pilot] challenges you to think differently... it's not an easy thing... because you do have to think creatively

”



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