



CASE STUDY

Transforming a Firm:

How Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, Aderant, and Fireman & Company Created a Lawyer-Centric Intranet

The role of a law firm's intranet is rapidly evolving from that of a firm-wide channel used solely for communication and digital signposting to that of an indispensable tool that tangibly improves the way lawyers perform their work and manage their practice. Nelson Mullins has launched a next-generation intranet - **NMConnect** - that delivers personalized, actionable data across 26 growing offices. Collaboration and communication among the lawyers and staff have increased by an estimated 40%, despite working remotely.

This places Nelson Mullins at the forefront of revolutionizing its once-underutilized intranet. The firm, in partnership with Aderant and Fireman & Company, sought to create an intranet that would adapt to the growing demands of a digital workspace by specifically addressing limitations in adoption, usability, and business value. Nelson Mullins' progressive mindset and commitment to being forward-thinking, which has been fostered by CIO David Worth, inspired the firm to envision a transformed intranet. The firm's goal was to strategically enable remote work across its expanding and geographically dispersed offices. With these goals in mind, Nelson Mullins, Aderant, and Fireman & Company set out to create a next-generation intranet that would serve as a resource for both firm communication and lawyer success.

Where They Were

Like many other law firms and businesses, Nelson Mullins had an intranet with unrealized potential due to both low relevance to the needs of the firm and low usage. Like many law firm intranets, theirs provided no insights into timekeeping or financials, no connections to the disparate systems commonly used by attorneys, and it lacked a single source of truth for all firm data. Prior to the development and implementation of Aderant Handshake the firm's intranet usage idled at approximately 20%, and firm leadership relied on daily emails to communicate crucial updates to their twenty-six offices.

Under the leadership of Worth, Nelson Mullins envisioned an intranet that:

- Closely aligned with business and user requirements,
- Directly supported the work of attorneys and met the firm's demand for productivity gains,
- Connected a growing, geographically dispersed firm, and
- Enabled remote working.

"NELSON MULLINS RECOGNIZED THAT THERE WAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RE-ENVISION THEIR INTRANET AND ALIGN IT TO THE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES OF THE FIRM. THEY KNEW THAT HANDSHAKE COULD MAKE IT SO MUCH MORE, AND THEY KNEW THAT WE COULD HELP WITH MAXIMIZING THEIR INVESTMENT AND CREATING A DESIGN THAT WOULD BE KEY TO BOTH INCREASED ADOPTION AND BOTTOM-LINE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS." – TOM BALDWIN, FIREMAN & COMPANY

The Project

Nelson Mullins' decision to implement Aderant Handshake was an easy one, combining the platform's dozens of system connections with the firm's deep development expertise. Designing an intranet that would work for everyone in the firm, however, presented more challenges.

To begin, Worth had to develop a clear understanding of what needs the intranet should satisfy for each member of the firm. To this end, Fireman & Company and Worth conducted comprehensive interviews with a cross-section of the firm's partners, associates and business staff to understand their requirements for a new intranet. These interviews, in conjunction with brainstorming sessions led by Fireman & Company, unearthed common themes in terms of requirements, needs, and the expanded possibilities for the new intranet. From these themes, a blueprint was created that Worth and his team could leverage for their new intranet.

In partnership with Fireman & Company developers and the Nelson Mullins team, consisting of Worth's application manager Torrie Carrillo, the firms' CFO Doug Webb and Financial Reporting Manager Annette Powell, who helped architect the financials, Aderant professional services immediately began construction of the new intranet. With the Fireman team acting as both designer and project manager, the firm's intranet development project continued resiliently despite the global COVID lockdown and culminated with the release of the transformed **NMConnect** last fall.

Where They Are

NMConnect gives users an individually customizable portal that includes:

- financials,
- firm expertise,
- historical data; and
- intuitive search options that can be partitioned out by individual, practice area, office, departments, and more.

With **NMConnect**'s launch, Nelson Mullins delivered a powerful tool during a time when many other firms and companies were scrambling to reimagine their own intranet systems to better support the remote working forced by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Individual employee usage of **NMConnect** is now at 75%, wildly eclipsing the previous intranet's usage rate of 20%. Leaving behind daily emails, firm leadership has created a dedicated dashboard within **NMConnect** for company news, announcements, goals and overall strategy.

Where They Are (cont.)

Worth's dedication to collaborating with every department and ensuring he was creating a system that met everyone's needs, led to **NMConnect**'s immediate success. Using the same approach, Worth is already planning an updated version, which will extend capabilities, leveraging the Aderant Handshake toolkit to connect and centralize even more of the firm's systems. In addition, he plans to create customizable bots to surface relevant information to individual users.

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