Bureau of Meteorology streamlines legal procurement process with an end-to-end contract and matter management solution

Microsoft-based Consensus platform by Barhead Solutions deployed at the Bureau to give legal team greater control over data

Post by Barhead Solutions

About the organisation

As Australia's national weather, climate, and water agency, the Bureau of Meteorology (Bureau) is one of the few organisations in the country that affect the lives of all Australians. The surveillance, forecast, and warning services provided by the Bureau not only help everyday Australians deal with extreme weather phenomena, but is also relied upon by governments and industries to make informed decisions on policies and strategies.

Supporting the delivery of these fundamental services is the Bureau's legal department, which provides advice on a wide range of matters, from data-sharing agreements with regulatory bodies to the procurement of equipment and vendor management.

Challenge

One of the biggest challenges for legal procurement teams is keeping track of contracts and critical information, such as scheduled price increases, key amendments and other details. To manage legal matters and contracts, the Bureau was using an internally built matter management software (MMS). As a result of a number of issues within their MMS, the Bureau was looking for an enhanced solution which had a similar Microsoft-based look and feel.

Solution

Consensus, an end-to-end contract and matter management solution built on the Microsoft Cloud, has an intuitive and familiar interface that is similar to the Bureau's MMS.

'Newer team members can grasp Consensus quite quickly, given that it's user-friendly and already incorporates SharePoint and other Microsoft business applications,' says the Bureau's Senior Manager for Application Sourcing Services. 'This, combined with Consensus' in-built help tools, has made onboarding for new team members a lot easier.'

However, more than just convenience, Consensus offers new capabilities, most notably the contract lifecycle and facilities management modules which the senior manager says could be useful in the future. For the Bureau, what caught their attention was the greater level control over sensitive data stored in Consensus.

'As organisations transition to the cloud, legal teams are becoming increasingly concerned with data sovereignty and security,' explains Amanda Fajerman, Consensus' Engagement Manager, 'which is why our team ensured customers have complete control over their data within Consensus. In addition, as legal teams prepare for generative AI and CoPilot, we have seen an increased awareness in the use of Microsoft technology for information and knowledge management."

Impact

Using Consensus, the Bureau's legal department was not only able to easily track and manage matters and sensitive data from a centralised platform, but also file emails from Outlook, access documents from SharePoint and extract data for more accurate reporting.

These features, in addition to how easy it is to search for information, have cut down admin time, improved time efficiencies and reduced department overhead, resulting in cost savings for the Bureau.

One feature that the legal team found particularly useful is the Outlook integration that automatically track responses and forwarding emails. 'This is extremely beneficial for instances where a lawyer may be on leave, and another picks up the matter,' explains the Bureau's senior manager.

Combined with its seamless integration with Microsoft business applications, such as Outlook, Consensus ensures legal team members can easily find key information and collaborate on critical matters, while ensuring sensitive data is kept safe and remains secure.

Working with Barhead

On the transition from the internally built MMS to Consensus, the senior manager says it's been easy doing business with the Barhead team, and that there has been an easy level of engagement. Barhead previously implemented the Clearspace return-to-office solution at the height of the pandemic, and the senior manager notes that there has consistently been a high level of engagement from the team.

'If there was something that wasn't working, the Barhead team was always ready to make any needed adjustments,' the senior manager recalls.

What's next?

The Bureau is currently exploring plans to leverage more of the low-code Power Platform, while expanding the use of Consensus through its modular functions.