

## “Life-Changing” Technology

How NetApp proved the power of workflow automation for Legal Ops - and beyond.



## Pioneering the Frontier

In most cases, the words “legal” and “innovators” would combine to form an oxymoron. Connie Brenton, the Chief of Staff/Director of Legal Operations at NetApp and a member of the leadership team at the Corporate Legal Operations Consortium (CLOC), an industry group advocating for technological innovation within law firms and legal departments, has had a front-row seat to see how slow some firms have been to adopt new tools and platforms.

In the case of NetApp, however, Connie and her team pioneered innovation by proving the value of workflow.

That scale and complexity results in sizable demands on their legal department and outside counsels providing NetApp with legal support, who together form what Connie terms a “legal ecosystem” with an enormous number of workflows and processes. However, instead of getting lost in the weeds of such a vast ecosystem, NetApp sees its own complexity as another place to explore innovative thinking.

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**CONNIE BRENTON**

Chief of Staff/Director of Legal Operations at NetApp



## The Issue Driving Innovation

NetApp was seeking a technology solution to help address challenges and pain points that Legal Ops teams and law firms everywhere are confronting.

Creating collaboration and connection, both within a department or firm and with clients and external resources, is one of those. Establishing and reinforcing its branding and identity is another. Legal services providers are also, like most other enterprises, under pressure to be more responsive and agile.

Last but far from least, of course, is the mandate to reduce costs. One they have to meet even if they’re tasked with delivering more services, more rapidly, to a large client base, as in NetApp’s case.

## Adoption with Ease

Replacing traditional and familiar processes with digitized workflows can create a variety of effects within any enterprise, let alone a legal department. Anticipating and managing how it affects other facets of operations, from resources deployment to client service, can be just as important as the adoption of the platform in the first place.

NetApp faced an early hurdle in adopting workflow automation: identifying new use cases to apply it to, due to the lack of experience in applying the technology within business units. “Once we can identify a use case,” she says, “it’s a no-brainer.”

“Adopting workflow automation got us closer to our internal corporate partners, so we understood their processes and their pain points. It created so much efficiency so quickly that Legal Ops looked like real innovators,” Connie explains.

The ease of adoption provided by a Cloud-based, simple-to-use product (like TAP) can help make the case for workflow automation as a solution to these needs. Connie and her team decided to use the TAP Automation Platform to digitize their non-disclosure agreement (NDA) workflows as a “proof-of-concept” for workflow automation in Legal Ops.

“We rolled out our first use cases, which affected our operations, and discovered this technology is truly unique. It worked so well and was such an easy implementation, we got very little pushback,” Connie says. “It’s incredibly intuitive, so there’s very little training required.”

“The minute we started using it we found it was incredibly easy to implement, inexpensive, and with a high ROI.”

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## Proven in Practice

Eventually, NetApp identified so many potential use cases for workflow automation, it began to train internal experts; today, workflow automation has been applied to no less than 40 use cases. Building interest around WFA across business units wasn't difficult. "Implementing a workflow automation system has resulted in an immediate return," Connie says, "It's caught on by word of mouth from the positive impact."

Beyond internal collaboration, one of the main values of Cloud-based workflow automation is how it can potentially integrate with external partners and resources. As Connie explains, "It unites the entire legal ecosystem; since it can be used in different environments equally well, we can co-create with outside counsel," she says. "It's one of the few technologies that crosses in-house and outside counsel. As a result, we've shared our learnings within the ecosystem and within the industry so everyone can benefit."

At the end of the day, any innovation in business is only as good as its payback. According to Connie, the results of workflow automation weren't just

immediate, they were significant, and NetApp made sure to track that impact from the start.

"Not only does workflow automation save time and money, it has changed the way we do business," she says. "It allows us to create processes that are streamlined, which has helped our company embrace digital transformation. We save, on the average, \$70,000 a week from using electronic signatures. That's equivalent to \$3.6 MM a year."

## Empowering Evolution

An essential advantage that any workflow automation adopter should look for from a prospective platform, in NetApp's opinion, is its ease of adoption. "One of the benefits," Connie said, referring specifically to her experience with SaaS WFA, "is that you don't need IT. The fact we can configure it ourselves is a reason it's a big win inside the company. We can train anyone; it's a self-serve technology, and that's unusual."

That makes it easy to spread the benefits of workflow automation elsewhere across the organization, too. "All of this has empowered the enterprise, because these are now self-service solutions; we're training experts to be collaborators and leaders in extending these benefits to other departments," Connie says. "We've used it for very simple workflows, like NDAs, and we've used it for the most complex. We've used this during one of our last RIFs. We've also used it in different organizations including finance, sourcing, and sales."

Cloud-based workflow automation has permitted increased collaboration and connection, while also

“It’s one of those crazy, life-changing technologies.”

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reinforcing the branding of the legal department within NetApp. “It’s been a business enabler,” Connie says. “We use it to run our own department, and it’s how we help people run their departments.”

## Considering Workflow Automation?

As a leader of CLOC and a longtime automation advocate, Connie has advice for fence-sitters who haven’t made their mind up about adopting workflow automation. “My recommendation is to just start. The biggest impediment to change is that people are too afraid to start,” Connie says. “The earlier you start, the faster the cost savings, and the sooner you can spread the word throughout the entire enterprise.”

Beyond its immediate benefits, Connie is looking ahead to the other potential upsides workflow automation offers the legal profession. “We’re just getting started,” she says. , “It’s one of those crazy, life-changing technologies.”

SAVED A YEAR

**\$3.6 MM**

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# What About TAP?

As for the platform NetApp used to prove workflow automation's value, "TAP is one of the simplest, highest- payback tools in the industry," Connie says, "and it's the one people in Legal Operations should start with. It's one of my favorite technologies for advancing the legal industry. It's so simple, so powerful, it personifies what CLOC stands for. The minute we started using it, we found it was incredibly easy to implement, inexpensive, and with a high ROI."

During the adoption process, Connie and her colleagues found TAP's team "a dream to work with." Among the support they provided? "They've organized a user group where we've got influence over the product road map, we can help each other, share workflows, borrow workflows from others as a starting point, and vice-versa.

"They're fantastic to work with, and they're smart," she says. "They listen to the client. They're nimble, and consistent across every project."

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The image shows a large blue logo on a white building facade. The logo consists of a stylized 'N' shape above the word 'NetApp' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The building has several windows visible above the logo.

**NetApp**