

# Creating more hours in the day with legal document automation



## Client

Pawson Law

## Problem

Like most sole practitioners, the biggest challenge David faces is that of not enough hours in the day. Between them, David and his PA were becoming overwhelmed with the requirements of legal documentation and filing, and needed a legal document automation solution that would free them up to focus on more productive, billable tasks.

## Solution

David went with LawHawk after reading one of Gene's blogs. Their initial discussions led to how LawHawk could improve the speed and quality of David's document generation, as well as improve the efficiency of his interactions with clients.

**When demands on his time reached a critical point, sole practitioner David Pawson looked for a smart solution that would improve the speed and accuracy of completing legal documentation**

*The 12 years that David Pawson spent as a Senior Police Prosecutor meant that he gained a wide range of experience in legal issues, including serious violence, drugs, fraud, Coroners Inquests, and health and safety prosecutions involving fatalities or serious injuries.*

He also has over 25 years' experience as a legal advisor in Forestry, the NZ Customs Service and the NZ Military. When David launched his own legal practice, [Pawson Law](#) in 2018, he was immediately faced with a challenge that besets most sole practitioners - not enough hours in the day, particularly for the critical documentation essential to legal practice.

## Where can more hours be found?

The issue of time management had become a serious one for David Pawson. Performing tasks such as written submission work was becoming increasingly difficult to juggle against court commitments and client interactions. "If you're in court all day, you're left with very little time to work on even routine documents," David explains. "It's a bit

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- David Pawson, Director

like a war machine; as soon as you're committed on one front, that's it - you can't fight on another.”

David was also interested in improving the accuracy of his legal documentation. Using old templates and precedents meant that he was running the risk of not getting the details right. “Offender Sally Jones might have a similar case to offender Jack Jones, so you copy hers and update it for him,” he says. “When you're the drafter, it's very easy to miss things like changing 'she' to 'he'. Little details like that add up and the inaccuracies don't make you look good.”

Bogged down in legal documentation and facing increasing time in the courtroom, David realised that the way to find more time was via technology. He had heard of document automation through reading a [LawHawk blog](#), and made the decision to investigate further in the hope that the documentation side of his practice could be streamlined, with improved accuracy and significant time savings.

## **A solution for improved time management**

After reading a blog by LawHawk Managing Director Gene Turner, David reached out and explained the challenges he was facing, including:

- That his clients might instruct him, but not give him all the information needed to provide the service until the last minute when it is suddenly urgent again
- Spending a lot of time in courtrooms in various locations, David was highly constrained in trying to complete paperwork to the standard he wanted
- Wasting time on people trying to gain free legal advice

“After learning more about David's issues, I thought we had an opportunity to not only improve the speed and quality of the document generation, but also make the interactions with clients more efficient too,” Gene recalls.

David didn't have the time to seek out and research various options for legal automation, but he says that LawHawk impressed from the beginning. “Gene's a lawyer - he understands,” David explains. “He's been there and done that, and that's a big thing. I wasn't going to be talking to a techie who didn't understand what I was talking about, and I don't have time to explain it to them.”

Working through David's issues with him, LawHawk developed a solution that has made the limited licence application process much more efficient. David's PA Dani asks the client questions and then fills out the form accordingly, using the automation tool. “It asks qualifying questions like 'have you been convicted of drink-driving in the last five years?’,” David explains. “If they have, they're not eligible for a licence and the tool defaults to that disqualifier, meaning you're not wasting time filling out the whole form, then filing it in court only for it to be denied straight away.”

The automation of client letters of advice have also realised major time savings. It's a legal requirement to send these to clients, informing them of their options, but they are extremely time-intensive and David was struggling to keep up with them. Now that they've been automated, he's able to produce one in just a few minutes.

### **The LawHawk solution also covers:**

- Sentencing submissions
- Discharge without conviction applications
- Engagement letters
- Applications to avoid disqualification from driving

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The LawHawk solution is also one that Dani can make use of, creating documentation that would typically take a big chunk out of David's day. David has then only to review it, which takes a lot less time than creating it himself. It has meant that Dani has been able to take on a lot of the work that was bogging David down, and because it's a user-friendly system, it didn't take her long to get to grips with it. Now Dani does her own limited licence applications remotely for clients that David doesn't have time for, meaning she's able to run a small side-line business of her own.

## **Efficiency gains, time savings and improved accuracy - adds up to greater confidence**

While still under time pressure, the LawHawk solution has freed up a significant amount of hours for David, enabling him to achieve his goals. "I'm now meeting deadlines for filing, and have significantly improved the accuracy of my legal documentation," he says. "The processes are more efficient, which means I've achieved a major goal - that of time savings."

The quality of David's documents has also greatly improved. "When you're dealing with legal issues, it's very easy to get bogged down in the quagmire of typing and formatting," he says. "Eventually you lose the flow, the core of what you're supposed to be writing, and you forget things. Now, the formats are all tidied up, and nothing gets left out. I don't have to worry about that side of it; I can just concentrate on what I'm doing."

When asked about the cost-effectiveness of the LawHawk solution, David says the ROI is an intangible one. "In terms of time savings, it's exponential," he says. "I'm able to spend a lot more time working on billable tasks, and more productive ones."

A key benefit that David has realised since implementation is a rise in confidence in his business. "The worst thing about being a sole practitioner is loss of control - everything coming at you, it can be overwhelming," he explains. "Automation means I know things are actually under control. The system is reliable, it's working, it removes that margin of error - that gives me business confidence and peace of mind."

So what advice does David have for time-pressed sole practitioners like himself? "Even though you don't think you have the time to look into this sort of technology, make the time," he advises. "Budget your time like you do your money. Set aside some time to do this, because the benefits at the other end are worth it. We're often not good time managers and a solution like this reduces that hassle."

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## **About LawHawk**

LawHawk's advanced legal automation, with its built-in real-time training and compliance, allows anyone to draft highly customised documents and complete other legal processes in minutes rather than hours and at very low cost. Document drafts will be better quality, more consistent and compliant with key requirements. With a unique combination of legal and automation expertise, LawHawk is committed to revolutionising how high quality and consistent legal and procurement documents are generated, and setting new standards for what is possible.

[www.lawhawk.nz](http://www.lawhawk.nz)