

## STIKEMAN ELLIOTT

STIKEMAN ELLIOTT LLP

## Leading Canadian Law Firm Works Smarter by Integrating Conferencing, IM, and Presence

### Overview

**Country or Region:** Canada

**Industry:** Professional services—Legal

### Customer Profile

Named Canadian Law Firm of the Year for 2006 by Chambers Global, Stikeman Elliott is a leader in business law. The firm has 1,300 employees, 450 of whom are lawyers.

### Business Situation

The company wanted to move from a hosted meeting and conferencing solution to an on-premise solution in order to reduce meeting costs.

### Solution

Stikeman Elliott deployed the Beta version of Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007 to nearly 100 employees. Now users can switch seamlessly between online conferences, IM sessions, and VoIP calls.

### Benefits

- Faster, more efficient communication
- Increased collaboration and faster task resolution
- Wide-area cost savings
- Increased responsiveness to clients
- Improved training

“The ability to share a document with the conferencing feature, and to co-edit that document with a colleague—it’s going to be great. It’s just not something we’ve had a way to do until now.”

Jason Hachey, Technical Analyst, Stikeman Elliott

The law firm of Stikeman Elliott is a leader in business-law practice. Chambers Global honored it as Canadian Law Firm of the Year for 2006. In an effort to save money by bringing its Web conferencing service in-house, the firm deployed Microsoft® Office Communications Server 2007. It found that this solution would not only provide it with on-premise conferencing, but also improve communications with advanced presence and voice over Internet Protocol technology. Firm members can now choose how to best contact colleagues based on dynamic availability and contact preference information. Stikeman Elliott anticipates long-term cost savings through reduced telephone and travel costs; and trainers look forward to improving the accessibility of the resources they provide, while freeing up time for other projects.

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Enzo DiStefano, Network Services  
Team Leader, Stikeman Elliott

## Situation

The law firm of Stikeman Elliott is recognized nationally and internationally for the sophistication of its business-law practice. Chambers Global, the leading international legal directory, honored the firm as Canadian Law Firm of the Year for 2006. The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory recently ranked the firm’s national litigation group among the top-three business litigation practices in Canada. Some of the company’s core practice areas are corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, banking, and real estate. Founded in Quebec in 1952, Stikeman Elliott has offices in Toronto, Montréal, Ottawa, Calgary, and Vancouver, in addition to maintaining a strong international presence.

In 2006, some of the firm’s members were using MSN® Messenger Services to send and receive instant messages (IM) for quick, easy communication with one another. “IM is handy in that if somebody is on the phone, you might be able to send them an instant message and get a quick response—quicker than sending e-mail back and forth or waiting for them to get off the phone,” says Jason Hachey, Technical Analyst at Stikeman Elliott. In addition, the firm used the Microsoft® Office Live Meeting Web conferencing service to hold frequent Web-based meetings with colleagues and clients around the globe.

Looking to the future, Stikeman Elliott planned to increase its usage of Web conferencing technology. Using this technology to train employees was an exciting prospect for the firm. With its host-based conferencing paradigm, the law firm was paying a per-conference fee for each usage. Instead, Stikeman Elliott wanted to move to an on-premise solution. “We realized it would be smart from a business investment perspective to host our Web conferencing service internally,” says Enzo DiStefano, Network Services Team Leader at Stikeman Elliott.

## Solution

To meet this challenge, the firm decided to take advantage of the Rapid Deployment Program for Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 Beta and worked with Microsoft Gold Certified Partner LegendCorp. The solution integrates multiparty on-premise audio/video and Web conferencing, and secure, enterprise IM into the familiar Microsoft Office system desktop environment. Stikeman Elliott members can now easily start on-site live meetings from within common desktop applications. “We can schedule meetings right from an active e-mail message or IM conversation,” says DiStefano.

Users can also make and receive voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone calls, and quickly see one another’s “presence”—availability and contact preferences—from within everyday work applications such as the Microsoft Office Outlook® messaging and collaboration client.

The solution also gives users the ability to share, co-edit, and collaborate on documents, and share desktop files and programs.

By June 2007, Stikeman Elliott had deployed Office Communications Server 2007 to nearly 100 users, primarily to hold on-site audio and video meetings, “But we are using it for many other things,” says Hachey.

## Benefits

By using Office Communications Server 2007, Stikeman Elliott members can reach each other more quickly and efficiently. The firm expects to see widespread cost savings through reduced telephone usage, lower conferencing fees, and less interoffice travel. Stikeman Elliott anticipates that integrating the solution with mobile devices will help lawyers who are away from the office respond to clients faster. And the training department

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Jason Hachey, Technical Analyst,  
Stikeman Elliott

is looking forward to offering employees a wider range of 24/7 training sessions.

#### **Faster, More Efficient Communication**

With the solution's presence engine, Stikeman Elliott members can see one another's online status and availability directly from their Outlook welcome screens. Next to each user's name is a presence icon that provides information about that user's availability. This information can be customized to say, for example, "In a Conference Call," "Contact by IM only," "Do Not Disturb," or "In Court." System administrators can specify that presence be controlled automatically based on users' Outlook calendar and login status, or users can set their own status and individualize it for different contacts.

“Being able to see at a glance from common work applications whether someone is in a meeting, is reachable by phone or e-mail, or is reachable only in emergencies, lets employees more quickly find the person they need when they need them, and spend less time playing guessing games,” says Hachey.

With 1,300 employees, including 450 lawyers, who need to quickly communicate with each other, “Presence is all about time. If we can see one another's presence, we have a lot better chance of connecting with the person that we want.”

When a phone call is the best way to reach a colleague, VoIP lets members phone one another directly from their PCs. For example, from Outlook, Hachey can right-click the name of a colleague in London and then call that person without ever having to pick up the telephone. “I am very, very pleased with the quality of the VoIP audio—especially considering we are doing these calls over the slowest connection of any of our offices,” he says.

#### **Increased Collaboration and Faster Task Resolution**

The ability to seamlessly move from e-mail and instant messages to phone calls and video and audio meetings with a single click provides major value to the firm. From a problem- or task-resolution perspective, the benefits can be crucial. DiStefano comments, “Say there's an e-mail message to five people about a security breach. I would say, 'Let's see if we can get everybody together right now and start brainstorming on this issue, with maybe an audio conference with everyone.' We can see right away whether everyone who received that message can be contacted immediately. This is a big deal, because we can really get a resolution a lot more quickly than calling people or scheduling a meeting for the next day.”

The collaboration features are also key in expediting day-to-day tasks such as reviewing a document. According to Hachey, “The ability to share a document with the conferencing feature, and to co-edit that document with a colleague—it's going to be great. It's just not something we've had a way to do until now.”

Hachey co-edited a document with a colleague in London recently. “We were chatting in an IM session, and we actually went into an online meeting right from the session and started working on the document together.” This “definitely helped” both parties to finish the document faster, says Hachey. “Normally, I would mark up a document, send over a draft, and the person would write in it or give me their comments and send it back—but when we're working together, it's done in no time.”

#### **Wide-Area Cost Savings**

Comparing the incremental investment required by the solution with the cost savings gained by fewer long-distance telephone calls and hosted meeting fees, Stikeman Elliott foresees a strong return on investment.

“On-site conferencing is becoming very important for the training department ... This will enable them to do a lot more research on new applications as well as old ones.”

Jason Hachey, Technical Analyst,  
Stikeman Elliott

“Those of us who use the Beta client make only PC-to-PC calls to our London office. So we are certainly reducing what we pay for in telephone calls,” Hachey says. Eventually, the firm plans to integrate Office Communications Server VoIP into its existing corporate PBX phone system.

The law firm also expects travel expenses to decrease. Hachey comments, “Until now, when our lawyers have needed to collaborate, they would usually get together somehow. They would book a boardroom or book a flight. We expect travel expenses to decrease significantly as the full solution is rolled out.”

#### **Increased Responsiveness to Clients**

About half of the firm’s members rely on mobile devices to communicate while away from the office, so the solution’s interoperability with many mobile devices is important. “We are currently preparing to take part in a Beta that integrates Office Communications Server with our existing devices,” Hachey says. When the integration is complete, Stikeman Elliott members will have all of the Office Communications Server 2007 features—including presence, IM, conferencing, and VoIP—directly on their mobile devices.

When all of the firm’s 450 lawyers have integrated presence and other Office Communications Server features on their mobile devices, Hachey predicts that lawyer responsiveness to clients will increase. “The ability to notice from the mobile device that one of your colleagues or clients is available and to start up a conversation with them—that’s going to be huge,” he says.

#### **Improved Training**

The conferencing features are beginning to change the way the training department operates, says Hachey. “On-site conferencing is becoming very important for the training

department. We have a number of different applications here and sometimes it’s hard for people to get the training they need. Our training department can now record sessions for a number of different applications and archive them. Then we’ll stream them from our intranet site so people can review them at any time.”

This is expected to free up a lot of time for the training department. Hachey concludes, “It would be nice for our trainers to be very up to date on every piece of software that we use. This will enable them to do a lot more research on new applications as well as old ones.”

Based on their experience with the Beta version of Office Communications Server 2007, firm administrators and lawyers alike look forward to rolling out the final product when it becomes publicly available.

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about LegendCorp products and services, call 416-465-4540 or visit the Web site at: [www.legendcorp.com](http://www.legendcorp.com)

For more information about Stikeman Elliott products and services, call (514) 397-3000 or visit the Web site at: [www.stikeman.com](http://www.stikeman.com)

## Microsoft Office System

The Microsoft Office system is the business world's chosen environment for information work, providing the programs, servers, and services that help you succeed by transforming information into impact.

For more information about the Microsoft Office system, go to: [www.microsoft.com/office](http://www.microsoft.com/office)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 Standard Edition
  - Microsoft Office Communicator 2007

### Partner

- LegendCorp

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