Lex Mundi Equisphere

Knowledge Packs for
More Successful Matter Outcomes

Matter
Management Module

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GIMBAL
LEAN PRACTICE MANAGEMENT ADVISORS

5-Step Guide to Planning Your Matter-Management Board

Step 1: Determine Your Column Headings:

Consider the nature of the matter you are working on and decide the different phases you're going to use to track progress of the different tasks. Those phases become the column headings on your matter-management board. Create a list.

> **TIP**: You shouldn't think farther ahead than is useful to your project management needs.
>
> Don't, for example, include the tasks associated with trial on your initial matter-management board for a civil litigation defence file if the majority of your cases in this type of litigation settle.
>
> Certainly, you can create a board for trial and even appeal, but only as and when necessary. Then the next time your litigation file goes to trial or from trial to appeal you'll be able to count on the template matter-management boards you've created and used before.

To get you started, Appendix 1 to this Guide sets out a sample list of column headings for each of:

- a buy-side M&A deal;
- a commercial real estate transaction; and
- a civil litigation defence file

Step 2: Identify the different categories of tasks you will track

In transactional matters, common categories include:

- Due Diligence
- Issues that arise in the course of the transaction
- Documents/Drafting

In litigation matters, common categories include:

- Pleadings
- Motions
- Discovery
- Trial/Appeal

If your matter reaches trial or goes to appeal, then you might consider creating a whole new board to monitor and manage all of the tasks associated with each of those phases of your matter.

Step 3: Create Your Initial Task List

Create a list of all of the tasks that experience (or a practice guide, precedent, or template) tells you are likely to be associated with the matter. List the tasks you feel are important enough to your project management and reporting needs to be tracked across the lifecycle of the file. Designate the category to which each task belongs.

Step 4: Project Manager Creates Your Draft Board

Hand your lists of column headings, tasks, and categories to the Project Manager. They will use your information to set up your board (whether physically or electronically), and populate the To Do column with the initial set of task cards.

Step 5: Review with the Project Manager

Review the structure and organization of the board with the Project Manager, and make any changes required to meet your project management and reporting needs. If, during your review, you decide the columns should be presented in a different order—say, for example, you decide in your real estate deal that the Closing Phase should appear after the encumbrances are released and title to the property is registered—simply reorder the columns.

This is where using temporary column labels is very useful if you are working with a physical board. If the board was created using HighQ, then you simply grab and drag the column to the new location.

Appendix 1

Sample list of column headings for a buy-side M&A deal

To Do/Not Started
In Progress:
- Initial Review: Issue Identification/Requesting Information
- In Drafting
- Internal Review & Revision (including with client)
- Negotiation & Revision
- Form of Document / Issue Settled
- Document Assembly (Agreements, Forms, Schedules, etc.)
- Approved, Printed & Tabbed for Signature
- Signed
- Closing
- Registration of Share Transfer
- Post Closing: Integration of Target Business*
- Post Closing: Purchase Price Adjustment*
- Client Reporting

Done

*You might decide to create a separate board for the tasks that arise post-closing. In that case, you could delete these two phases from your list of column headings for the initial board. Ultimately, you decide how the board should be structured to best meet your and/or your client's project management and reporting needs.

Sample list of column headings for a commercial real estate transaction

To Do/Not Started
In Progress:
- Initial Review: Issue Identification/Requesting Information
- In Drafting
- Internal Review & Revision (including with client)
- Negotiation & Revision
- Form of Document / Issue Settled
- Incorporated in Documents (Agreements, Forms, Schedules, etc.)
- Document Approved, Printed & Tabbed for Signature
- Signed
- Closing
- Release: Encumbrances, Funds, Title
- Registration of Title
- Client Reporting

Done

Sample list of column headings for a civil litigation defence file

To Do/Not Started
In Progress:
- Assess
- Develop Strategy and/or Budget
- Drafting (Responses/Pleadings/Motions)
- Internal Review & Revision (including with client)
- Service/Filing
- Case Conferences
- Mediation/Settlement
- [Trial Preparation]*
- [Trial]*
- [Judgment]*
- Client Reporting
- [Appeal]*

Done

*You might decide to create one or more separate boards for the tasks associated with trial preparation, trial, judgment, and appeal. It depends on how often your files in a given type of case proceed past mediation/settlement on to trial and/or appeal. Ultimately, you decide how the board should be structured to best meet your or your client's project management and reporting needs.