



Business challenge

In response to the challenges presented by increasing globalization and competition, law firms need to shed back-office baggage and enhance their fee-earning capacity. How can they sharpen efficiency?

Transformation

Fulcrum offers world-leading advanced legal practice management solutions, based on integrated SAP software, delivered to global law firms using powerful IBM Cloud bare metal servers certified by SAP.

Business benefits:

Enables

law firms to avoid the overhead of managing complex back-office systems

Simplifies

the adoption of best practice processes to foster efficiency and compliance

Eliminates

capital investment, and reduces IT administration and management workload

Fulcrum Transformational digital business platform for global law firms enables operational excellence

Fulcrum Global Technologies offers system, process and operational service management to the global legal industry. With more than 30 rapid deployment solutions, built for any size firm, Fulcrum encompasses almost every functional aspect of a law firm's operations, including time entry, new business intake, CRM, HR, matter budgeting, billing and finance, collections and comprehensive analytics. The Fulcrum GT Pro Series for Legal delivers powerful enterprise practice management solutions, running on world-class SAP HANA software, hosted on IBM Cloud.

"As the only certified provider to offer SAP S/4HANA on bare metal servers, IBM has set a new standard for how we want to run our back-end infrastructure."

Ahmed Shaaban

Managing Director

Fulcrum Global Technologies

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Serving a volatile global market

As more companies go global, the race is on among law firms to build their international presence and capabilities. To support rapid expansion into new geographies, law practices are acquiring subsidiaries and merging with regional partners.

However, business growth often presents significant challenges. In particular, during mergers and acquisitions, the complex effort of integrating data, processes and operations can divert attorneys from the core focus of serving their clients, diminishing effectiveness and reducing profitability.

At the same time, the general business environment for legal advisory services is undergoing major disruption. Traditional client relationships are becoming less profitable as corporate clients restrain costs by demanding alternative fee arrangements such as fixed-fee services, volume discounts and fee caps.

As a result, the need to focus on operational efficiency has never been greater. From billing systems to data confidentiality to compliance obligations, it is vital to ensure that information management and business processes don't erode fee-earners' billable time and reduce profitability, while allowing them to deliver responsive customer service.

Fortunately, help is at hand. Fulcrum Global Technologies, a global provider of technology and BPO solutions for the legal industry, has harnessed the power of [SAP](#) to build a suite of applications and services that help law firms and corporate legal departments streamline their back-office operations and achieve operational excellence.

Ahmed Shaaban, Managing Director of Fulcrum, comments: "The overwhelming majority of law firms and legal practices still rely on on-premises IT systems, which absorb time and resources, and often present a major obstacle to expansion projects, including mergers and acquisitions."

"Fulcrum's operations-as-a-service offerings, enabled by SAP-certified IBM Cloud bare metal servers and built on SAP software, help legal practices create the streamlined, internationalized operational models that they will need to compete in the future."

Ahmed Shaaban, Managing Director, Fulcrum Global Technologies

Moving toward a cloud-based infrastructure will help to eliminate much of the time and effort that law firms currently spend on hardware investments, server maintenance and data center management. However, most standard multi-tenant public cloud architectures cannot offer the level of security and resilience that Fulcrum requires to handle sensitive and confidential legal data.

"Our portfolio now comprises more than 30 solutions, designed to meet almost 10,000 legal industry requirements, across dozens of countries, languages and currencies," says Ahmed Shaaban. "As an industry, we have to support the financial, legal and business practices of each country, and adhere to the relevant compliance, confidentiality and data protection regulations. So we need to know where our data is, how it's stored, and how it's protected—and that's just not possible with a commodity cloud provider."

Building excellence on SAP and IBM foundations

Ahmed Shaaban explains: "SAP software provides world-class enterprise management, and Fulcrum has developed highly tailored solutions to help international law firms be the best that they can be. We wanted to find a way to offer the same functionality, while minimizing the cost and effort of maintaining their own infrastructure."

Many of Fulcrum's solutions are built on SAP HANA applications, and harness the intuitive SAP Fiori interface to make it easy for clients to interact with streamlined back-office processes. As with any enterprise solution, implementing on-premises can place significant demands on client IT teams. With other solutions, topics such as the best way to implement instances, establishing a refresh strategy and selecting, sizing and purchasing the right hardware, are major distractions from core operations.

Fulcrum knew that cloud enablement could provide a simple way for clients to deploy its solutions, eliminating the capital expense and systems administration workload of on-premises systems.

“The difficulty was to find the right kind of cloud architecture,” says Ahmed Shaaban. “We looked for cloud service providers that could offer not only pure technical capabilities – such as scalability, reliability and availability – but also enough flexibility to meet the operational and regulatory needs of law firms in over 100 countries. That’s why we chose [IBM Cloud](#).”

[IBM Cloud bare metal servers](#) provide a dedicated, single-tenant architecture that offers Fulcrum and its clients complete control over where and how data is managed, exchanged, and processed. For example, if a client needs certain types of data to be stored within the borders of a specific country or region, Fulcrum can configure an IBM Cloud environment in an appropriate IBM data center to meet those specific needs.

Moreover, unlike typical commodity cloud providers, IBM provides the bare metal servers as part of a fully managed service, which means that if Fulcrum needs to meet a new compliance or security requirement for one of its clients, IBM experts are always available to help find a solution.



IBM’s close relationship with SAP was also a key factor in Fulcrum’s decision. The powerful IBM Cloud bare metal servers are certified by SAP for production SAP HANA and SAP NetWeaver workloads.

“As the first certified provider to offer [SAP S/4HANA](#) on bare metal servers, IBM has set a new standard for how we want to run our back-end infrastructure,” says Ahmed Shaaban. “It’s an exclusive, formidable team: the number-one business software provider in SAP, the number-one infrastructure provider in IBM, and the number-one legal industry solution from Fulcrum.”

Leveraging global operations for local success

With nearly 60 IBM and IBM Cloud data centers worldwide to choose from, Fulcrum can select exactly the right environment to help each client meet complex compliance, data protection and statutory requirements.

At the same time, the flexibility of the IBM Cloud bare metal servers enables Fulcrum to design offerings that minimize complexity for clients. For example, Fulcrum has worked closely with IBM to create a series of pre-configured, pre-sized environments that it can spin up into production in just a few days. The ability to choose a “small,” “medium” or “large” environment and be confident that the hardware will be appropriate to the demand means that clients do not need to spend time on IT considerations and can deploy the Fulcrum solutions as rapidly as possible.

In fact, the IBM Cloud is helping Fulcrum to embrace a new business model and create an entirely new offering, called “Virtual Operations Deployment.” Through the IBM embed program for Business Partners, Fulcrum offers complete operations-as-a-service, giving clients the option to wrap the costs of implementation, software, licensing, infrastructure, hosting and administration into a simple, predictable subscription-based model.

"The principle is that clients can outsource some or all of their back-office operations to Fulcrum," says Ahmed Shaaban. "We handle all the technology and management, and their capital requirement is reduced to zero. This is only possible because we can combine Fulcrum's deep understanding of our clients' business needs with enterprise-class software from SAP and flexible infrastructure from IBM Cloud."

As part of the operations-as-a-service offering, Fulcrum sees strategic opportunities to offer additional services from the IBM Cloud and [IBM Watson®](#) portfolios. For example, the company continues to integrate machine learning and artificial intelligence capabilities into its applications, creating systems that can learn how each client's back-office processes work, and start to automate low-value work and eliminate inefficiencies.

"As we continue to leverage IBM Watson to make our systems smarter, our clients are able to grow their businesses without



having to grow their back-office staff. IBM Cloud opens up opportunities to leverage artificial intelligence that would not be possible with a pure-play web hosting provider."

Ahmed Shaaban concludes, "We don't just want to sell software, manage implementations and handle backups;

we want to help our clients lead the way in transforming the legal industry. Fulcrum's operations-as-a-service offerings, enabled by SAP-certified IBM Cloud bare metal servers and built on SAP software, help legal practices create the streamlined, internationalized operational models that they will need to compete in the future."

Solution components

- IBM® Cloud™ bare metal servers certified by SAP for production SAP HANA and SAP NetWeaver workloads
- SAP® ERP
- SAP HANA®
- SAP S/4HANA®
- Fulcrum GT Pro Series for Legal

Take the next step

To learn more about IBM Cloud, or running SAP software on IBM Cloud, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/cloud/sap/certified-infrastructure

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