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Legal process outsourcing

All industries face the competitive imperative to provide more value at lower cost. This is as true in legal services as it is in IT. In the legal industry, those who are client-facing must provide more value, which can be achieved by relieving them of functions that can be automated, streamlined, and moved to remote knowledge workers.

Legal process outsourcing has been around for nearly a decade, however the rate at which it has expanded in 2010 and 2011 has been unprecedented.

According to The LPO Program, a LPO advisory portal, the Global LPO market grew 34% (\$217m) in 2011, from a base of \$640m in 2010, to \$857m. European and US companies, along with law firms, began to adopt LPO as a viable business practice that would reduce expenses. In addition, as the rate of adoption has increased, the kinds of legal work being outsourced have become more sophisticated.

Pankaj Parnami, Founder Director, KPO Consultants, said: "Throughout 2011, legal outsourcing contracts have been even more encouraging with big legal support service providers like Integreon and CPA Global (recently acquired by Cinven) signing up multi-million dollar deals with the giants like Rio Tinto and Cameron McKenna respectively.

"They are also partnering with magic circle law firms notably Clifford Chance, Eversheds and Pinsent Masons, showing

keen interest in legal outsourcing. Recently, Slaughter and May has also expressed a keen interest in outsourcing some of its operations to big Indian outsourcers like CPA to reduce its cost. With big contracts like this I can say with conviction – outsourcing is here to stay."

The value and benefit of qualified LPO companies has been validated by some of the world's largest firms and corporations through the establishment of long-term relationships. These alliances are able to optimise the talents of both organisations, resulting in a better and more cost-effective product for the client. These partnerships can proactively address and respond to critical issues – not just in litigation matters, but also in legal research and transactional due diligence, among other practice areas.

UnitedLex, a global full service provider of technology powered legal and business solutions, announced a leading strategic partnership with UNIFIED last year, a leading provider of legal technology and outsourced support service, to provide document review and other LPO services for its UK, European and global clients.

Paul Mankoo, UNIFIED's Chief Executive Officer, said: "UnitedLex will open up a new channel of legal service resources, including a network of best-of-breed technology partners, and will help our clients reduce e-Discovery and litigation-related risks while improving preparedness."