

Case Study

Why The Foth Companies prioritized CLM to *scale* legal and risk management through rapid acquisition

Company

The Foth Companies

Location

USA

Industry

Business Services

Size

Mid-size



Objective

The Foth Companies, a Wisconsin-based consulting, engineering and construction management services firm, has grown rapidly in recent years, particularly through acquisitions over the past four. The expansion placed increasing demands on the business' two-person legal/risk team, requiring them to scale and evolve alongside the business.

General Counsel & Vice President of Risk Management Susan Davis and Senior Contracts Manager Carrie Voskuil saw, just like many legal/risk teams, that their headcount didn't change but the workload did.

As the volume of legal/risk requests and reviews increased, the processes established by Susan and Carrie were no longer scaling effectively. While some workflows had been documented and the team relied on a checklist playbook, it became clear that a more structured and organized approach was needed to improve efficiency and better support the wider business.

They knew the answer to their problems was a contract lifecycle management (CLM) solution that would structure their intake process, enable more consistent and efficient contract reviews and provide a more consolidated system to house and manage the growing number of contracts.

At the same time The Foth Companies had established a new AI governance board which encouraged all departments to adopt and implement AI. As many CLMs are powered by AI and provide features such as AI contract review and AI contract analysis, Susan and Carrie put their CLM project forward to the board and became one of the first AI initiatives in the business to gain board approval.

From there, the team began searching for their CLM solution.

“The biggest challenge we were facing is that we were seeing an increasing number of requests for review and we weren't seeing an increase in resources available. We had some of our processes documented and we had a checklist playbook, but it was clunky. We needed to get all of that organized in order to actually fix our workflows.”



Susan Davis, General Counsel
& Vice President of Risk
Management

Solution

“Our Summize Implementation Manager and the team helped us immensely with our data preparation and templates. We had to get that data into those templates and then Summize helped us put the prompts in so that they could be easily used by our users.”



Carrie Voskuil
Senior Contracts Manager

Before they began their CLM search, Susan and Carrie partnered with their IT team to create a list of requirements based on their specific use cases. They agreed the CLM solution needed to be user-friendly for their commercial teams to adopt. To support this, the solution had to integrate seamlessly with Microsoft tools such as Outlook, Teams, and Word. In addition, they identified a clear need for redlining functionality that would speed up reviewing, redlining and redrafting contracts during negotiations.

Once they had drafted their requirements list, they sent it out to a number of CLM vendors. The shortlist went to demos (seven in total) and Summize was picked as the CLM of choice.

Summize stood out to The Foth Companies for its integrated approach - meeting users inside Outlook and Teams rather than pulling them into another standalone tool. The embedded, integrated approach resonated with Susan and Carrie who knew the solution had to be easy for their commercial teams to adopt. By sitting in Outlook and Teams, the commercial parts of the business could work in the tools they were already used to.

Summize's AI contract review functionality, sitting in Microsoft Word, was another big win for the team. As AI provides a first pass contract review in under sixty seconds, alongside suggested redlines and clause amendments, Susan and Carrie knew the functionality would reduce the time spent on contract reviews.

When it came to implementation, the team worked hard to ensure that everything added to Summize was well-organized, up to date, and carefully reviewed. They spent time reviewing their templates, consolidating their playbook and gathering historical contracts scattered across business units. Their Summize Implementation Manager worked alongside Susan and Carrie to load the templates, build out the prompts, structure the clause library and design the intake workflows.

When it came to the CLM's roll-out, the team took a considered approach. They started with a pilot period, looping in users from their commercial teams who would be the first to test the tool's intake process and provide feedback on where improvements and tweaks could be made.

Once the pilot was complete, Susan and Carrie started small with Summize, first by just inputting NDAs through the system before widening the scope to include larger and more complex contracts.

The Outcome

Since implementing Summize, The Foth Companies' intake has moved out of a spreadsheet and into a CLM system the whole business can use and see. As Carrie puts it, *“our team can see what contracts we're working on, they can see where it falls in that list, where it is in the lifecycle of that agreement.”*

Communication now sits in one place. Instead of ten emails chasing one request, all comments and status updates live inside Summize alongside the contract itself, and the record is always there to refer back to.

Susan and Carrie agree that Summize has transformed their contract processes, but the advocacy doesn't only sit with the legal/risk team - The Foth Companies' commercial team has become advocates too. As many members of the commercial team were involved throughout the entire process - critically within the pilot stage - the roll-out, adoption and use has been effective and efficient. Business units now can create and request contracts directly in Outlook and Teams, and they can see agreements across subsidiaries, which was never possible before they had a CLM tool.

Shortly after The Foth Companies' Summize go-live date, the business closed another acquisition and faced the usual volume of inherited contracts. With Summize's clause library configured around the provisions that mattered to the legal team, they were able to load the new volume of contracts, pull the key data out and see a full picture extremely quickly. This first due diligence use case already proved the long-term value Summize would provide for the business.

Susan and Carrie are candid that a CLM solution isn't a magic wand and doesn't fix a business' contracting challenges overnight. But with the right list of requirements and uses cases at the start of their project, and hard work put in before and during their implementation process, they have shown how a CLM can be implemented, rolled out and adopted successfully by the business, with just a two-person legal team.

The Foth Companies now has a system that absorbs volume, provides visibility and prepares them for the next deal.

“A good CLM partner is going to come with software or a platform that is easy to use and integrates with the processes and the tools that you already use. You don't have to think, gosh, we need this standalone software that's not going to talk to anything else to get the job done.”



Susan Davis, General Counsel
& Vice President of Risk
Management