Matter opening

Matter opening follows a standard and mandatory procedure. Deviations from this procedure may only be authorized by Adam.

By way of introduction to this section, we market our services as solicitors, with barristers tagged into files as needed. Our engagement letters reflect this point. The firm itself is not a solicitor (because it cannot solicit–it is a corporation devoid of legal training). The individuals enrolled as solicitors provide legal services as officers of the courts.

A prospective client should be aware of this point. If the solicitor attached to the client's file only practices as a solicitor (–>Adam←-), then the client needs to know that a barrister will be appointed by the instructing solicitor, at the solicitor's discretion.

Anyone at the firm can open a client or matter file, but a non-lawyer must received directions from a lawyer in order to open a file in our system. The reason for this rule is that lawyers drive client acquisition, so they must be aware of file openings. Lawyers are also accountable to one another for client and matter files. If files are open in error, it is best that responsibility for the error fall on a lawyer.

A successful file opening is one that delivers this and other important information to the client, manages the client's expectations from the outset, and gathers information sufficient to satisfy the Law Society's requirements and our need for relevant information.

Overview of procedure

A client must provide all required contact information prior to an engagement letter issuing. Once this information is provided, an engagement letter is prepared using a Cosmolex template. That template is subsequently converted to PDF and sent to the prospective client.

A word on retainers

No client may ever be engaged without agreeing to and in fact paying a retainer. Retainers may only be accepted via interact e-transfer, wire transfer, or check. If a check is made out, we will not begin any work until the check is negotiated and the funds settled. If a matter is urgent, a check simply won't do the trick.

Types of engagement

We do not accept contingency fee agreements. A prospective client that asks about contingencies isn't a client at all. Such a person should be informed of the firm's policy. If they disagree and attempt to argue, communication may be terminated. If they continue to insist by sending vexatious e-mail communications, please inform *Adam Strömbergsson-DeNora*. He will block the e-mail address from future communications with the server.

Our default engagement is hourly, at the rates listed on the engagement letter. A client is either categorized as an **individual** or a **company**. A company will include any kind of business, save for a sole proprietorship. Sole proprietors are individuals.

Required documents

We require photo identification for each individual from whom we are required to take instructions.

Companies / businesses must also provide a copy of their founding documents. Any business, including a sole proprietorship, not trading on its legal name must also provide a master business record.

Procedure

The mandatory sequential steps are as follows:

1. Discussion with prospective client re. matter and payment;
2. Agreement in principle with prospective client;
3. Collecting client information and obtain client ID;
4. Create client card in Cosmolex contact database;
5. Edit client card to insert required retainer amount and scope of work;
6. Generate engagement letter using Cosmolex template;
7. Review engagement letter to ensure required information is present;
8. Convert engagement letter to PDF (portable document format) file;
9. Send PDF version of engagement letter to prospective client for signature;
10. Receive signed copy of engagement letter;
11. Open Cosmolex matter;
12. Create Nextcloud Drive folder;
13. Copy template folder structure into new folder;
14. Upload signed engagement letter to the Drive in INTERNAL DOCUMENTS–2. MATTER JOURNAL;
15. Upload client ID to the Drive in INTERNAL DOCUMENTS–2. MATTER JOURNAL;
16. Notify originating counsel that file is now open;
17. Create and send Cosmolex online retainer payment request for amount specified in engagement letter;
18. Receive retainer;
19. Notify originating counsel that retainer is received;
20. Telephone client to complete intake form (found in INTERNAL DOCUMENTS folder on the Drive; Download here); and
21. Notify originating counsel that intake form is complete.

Details regarding these steps may be found in the matter opening procedures page.

We dispense with these steps if the client already exists in the system. In such cases, we may opt to simply open a new file, if our engagement allows for it. If our engagement's scope of work is too specific, we will ask the client to enter into a fresh engagement.

For new clients

DEVIATIONS FROM THIS PROCEDURE MUST BE APPROVED *IN WRITING* BY ADAM STRÖMBERGSSON-DENORA

Drive folder creation

A drive folder for a client matter must be named using the following convention: once a Cosmolex matter is created, the matter's name (as found in the name bar when one opens the Cosmolex matter in Cosmolex) is copied and pasted as the matter folder name in the Drive.

No one is authorized to create a Drive folder for a matter without first creating a matter in Cosmolex.

No one is authorized to create a new matter in Cosmolex without obtaining instructions to create such a matter from counsel.

Engagement letter and ID naming convention

The engagement letter and client identification documents are uploaded as the first documents in the matter journal. They are subject to the matter journal naming convention. That convention is detailed here: File naming.

The documents collected as part of the intake process are all prefixed with

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, followed by an underscore

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and an ALL CAPITAL LETTERS tag describing the file (e.g. ENGAGEMENT, ID, ARTICLES).

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