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**CASE STUDY:**

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gunnercooke

# DELIVERING CLIENT VALUE AT GUNNERCOOKE

*Augmenting Legal Expertise  
with Process Innovation*

As a firm founded in 2010, **gunnercooke** may be relatively young, but the Limited Liability Partnership differentiates itself from longer established firms by being comprised solely of senior lawyers.

The firm's Partners - who have all accrued a minimum of 10,000 hours specialising in a particular area of law, including working in the world of commerce - command authority while delivering client-led service.

**Chris Jones** - an expert in the twin fields of restructuring & business growth and of civil fraud & asset tracing - is illustrative of the firm's approach of inspiring the best lawyers to work in a way that encourages them to deliver the greatest value to their clients.

"Previously, I was a partner at Irwin Mitchell, where I established that firm's Corporate Recovery and Insolvency department in Manchester," says Chris. "At Irwin Mitchell, I gained first-hand experience in how innovating within a business process can deliver benefits to the bottom line. I've brought a strong belief in the business value of innovation and process improvement to gunnercooke."

Chris is quick to acknowledge that gunnercooke's overarching objective of creating a very different law firm is of itself highly innovative. "A more usual practice is for senior lawyers to interact with corporate clients and to delegate much of the work to juniors and paralegals. While this approach may support a law firm's desire to grow, it doesn't guarantee the best outcomes for clients. Corporate clients greatly appreciate gunnercooke's approach, they value the fact that they are dealing with a senior lawyer able to demonstrate intimate knowledge of every detail of their matter."

A foundation of gunnercooke's business model is that the firm provides certainty and transparency over the cost of its services, and provides fixed-fee quotes that will never change.

The inquisitive may ponder how a firm of legal experts committed to remaining intimately involved in the workings of every case is capable of quoting fixed fees at prices attractive to their market.

"Giving senior lawyers access to state of the art tools and information frees them to spend time on the case and with their clients," explains Chris. "We trade-off having large teams by giving focus to process innovation, to seeking out new ways and new technologies, which in turn create opportunities for us to shorten cycle times and to reduce costs. With this advantage, partners at gunnercooke can be highly attentive to their clients' needs. And, all the savings that we make can then accrue as value to our clients."

## ABOUT GUNNERCOOKE

**gunnercooke** is one of the UK's fastest growing challenger law firms, providing a wide range of corporate and commercial legal services to businesses, banks and financial institutions.

Their model is centered around trusted advisors; lawyers who work collaboratively with their clients and advise with the authority of experience - every lawyer at gunnercooke has a minimum 10,000 hours practising experience.

For further information and contact details, visit [gunnercooke.com](https://www.gunnercooke.com)

## INNOVATING ESTABLISHED PROCESSES

As an example, Chris describes the process commonly employed in corporate law to establish an understanding of a company director. "I'm an experienced searcher; I've been working with Companies House records for twenty years. When I started in my legal career, undertaking a search on a company director involved staring for hours into records displayed on a microfiche reader. And while Companies House now make records available electronically, the process of search remains unchanged within many firms."

Not so at gunnercooke, where Chris has identified an opportunity for process innovation.

"At the time I first saw [Encompass Verify for Law](#), I was working on a large liquidation case that had been running for several years," remembers Chris. "Earlier in the case I had spent three hours searching records at Companies House to build an understanding of the history of an individual who was serving as a director at the company in liquidation. A brief demonstration of *Encompass Verify* was enough to get my attention."

"I asked the sales person to use their product to search on the director involved in my case. Bang! Within 30 seconds, *Encompass Verify* created a chart showing the director's involvement at many failed companies. This information was all familiar to me but here it was displayed on a chart that was so simple to understand that I immediately considered that it could have potential as a means of communication. Then, when I studied the chart closely, I realised *Encompass Verify* had found records at Companies House of the individual's involvement as a company director that I had missed. That really piqued my interest."

"Just consider the improvement potential for this operational process: three hours of a senior lawyer's time reduced to 30 seconds, while producing a result with significant improvement in accuracy compared to the long-established way of searching."

"This played directly to gunnercooke's philosophy of involving senior lawyers in all aspects of every case: instead of having to brief and hand-over to a paralegal, this technology transforms any lawyer into a power researcher. *Encompass Verify* is a good fit in gunnercooke's pursuit of process improvement."

“**three hours of a senior lawyer's time reduced to 30 seconds, while producing a result with significant improvement in accuracy**”

Chris cites the production of trial bundles as another process with potential for innovation. A trial bundle assists the judge by providing well-organised, collated information to be read pre-trial, and assists court proceedings by serving as a point of reference throughout the hearing. Many judges expect to receive all information printed on paper, collated into appropriate sections, with every page numbered, and the whole organised in files.

"In many law firms, creating the trial bundle remains largely a manual process, and one that is delegated to junior staff. Creating and producing a trial bundle can consume at least a day's work, and then the bundle must be returned to the senior lawyer who must check the entire document and authorise its release. Inevitably, on some cases the process is subject to error and oversight, which creates the need for iteration around the handover point between senior and junior lawyer, resulting in longer cycle times and increased costs."



using  
*encompass verify*  
transforms any  
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power researcher

"At gunnercooke, I use a software package to scan documents, collate, paginate and print all information needed in trial bundles. The software makes the task so straightforward and efficient that a senior lawyer can take responsibility for producing their own trial bundles. Operating this way reduces the potential for error, and can save at least one day's effort, supporting gunnercooke's model of providing services at fixed-cost."

For future cases, Chris plans to include charts created by *Encompass Verify* in evidence in trial bundles as he believes these lucidly communicate the salient facts in what can be complex and information-dense situations.

Beyond reducing cycle times and costs in their operational processes, gunnercooke understand the value of achieving transparency and predictability.

As Chris explains: "As a fixed-fee service provider, predictability is vital to our firm's success. Let me return to the search process to illustrate. If a firm relies on a paralegal to manually search records at Companies House to establish the facts of a matter, they experience great variability in the time required to complete their search process. A simple case involving one company and two directors may require twenty minutes of work, while a complex case may consume a whole day. This variability complicates work of establishing the appropriate fee to charge a client.

"Now consider automated search with *Encompass Verify*. Using software to complete the search process results in negligible variation in cycle time; a simple case might take ten seconds and a complicated one thirty or forty seconds. Process automation yields predictability which simplifies fee setting, and supports our values of transparency and value."

## ABOUT **ENCOMPASS VERIFY**

Leading firms rely on *Encompass Verify* to accelerate and enhance search at each stage of a case.

It empowers them to:

- Minimise risk and error with automation
- Visualise complex corporate structures
- Demonstrate compliance with ease
- Streamline processes to reduce un-billable work

Request your demo at:

[encompasscorporation.com/request-a-demo](http://encompasscorporation.com/request-a-demo)



## PROCESS INNOVATION

Process innovation delivers enduring value for gunnercooke and for its clients, as the same process may be used again and again throughout a case.

For several years, Chris has been working in his role as a restructuring specialist with a company forced to endure difficult trading conditions, resulting in a number of creditors seeking County Court Judgments (CCJs). To safeguard its reputation for prompt payment with suppliers and other creditors, the company pays the amount in full immediately to ensure CCJs are not recorded against it. To protect his client's reputation, Chris regularly checks the Register of Judgments, Orders and Fines to check that CCJs that have been paid are cleared from the register.

Chris explains how previously he followed the traditional process of tracking the Register's progress in clearing any CCJs: "Once a week I would visit the online site, order a report, read through the text, and update my tracking document. This would cost £4 and take about 20 minutes of my time."

With *Encompass Verify*, Chris has found a way to streamline this process.

As he explains: "I create a chart displaying my client company and all CCJs issued against it. Then once a week with a single click the software immediately updates my chart with the latest information from the Register – this is made available from the Company Credit report supplied by Creditsafe, a partner to Encompass. *Encompass Verify* flags automatically any changes since I previously researched my client's CCJ status. Using the product's refresh function provides a good, cost-effective way of staying current with my client's situation."

gunnercooke presents itself as a very different law firm, and the firm is walking the walk. Clients engage with senior lawyers, each an expert in their chosen area of law. Clients have certainty and transparency over the cost of the

giving senior lawyers access to state of the art tools and information frees them to spend time on the case and with their clients

firm's services, guaranteed by fixed fee quotes. To achieve this, gunnercooke relies on its own lawyers' deep commercial experience, and this is to the advantage of clients and to the firm.

Partners like Chris Jones bring a commercial edge, allowing them to look critically at the internal workings of their legal firm and question if there are better ways of working. This attention to the detail keeps fees down and keeps costs down, meaning clients pay for the substance: the experience and wisdom dispensed by gunnercooke's lawyers.



### ABOUT CHRIS JONES

**Chris Jones** has over 20 years' experience in restructuring, corporate recovery, insolvency and related work. He is a positive influence in a crisis and a true trusted advisor to clients.

Chris is rated in the legal directories Legal 500 and Chambers as a "great resource for complex aspects of insolvency law" and considered to be "tenacious and thorough in his approach" as well as "extremely approachable, calm and very pragmatic".



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## CONTACT

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### THE ENCOMPASS PRODUCT SUITE

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