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Providing cost certainty and predictability in the Calgary oil & gas market

A Calgary-based client facing unstable market conditions in the oil and gas industry needed a way to create better cost controls and budget transparency for their legal projects without reducing the scope of their mandate or impacting their day-to-day deliverables.

Recognizing the financial pressures facing the client, Osler proposed a cost-management solution that leveraged technology to produce a clear budget estimate under time constraints, while also providing greater matter transparency to foster an open client-counsel dialogue.

The technology component incorporated a regulatory budgeting tool developed in-house with our Osler Works — Delivery group that worked like a tracking system to identify the costs of each matter clearly and concisely. Combining the technology with a candid and collaborative approach to gathering and communicating information, our team was able to inform our client of any out-of-scope matters in real time and work with them to determine the best cost-saving measures.

Our Osler Works — Delivery team used the tool to compare actual fees against each specific task on the budget, and provided Osler's lead lawyer with a weekly report that broke down the fees to date by task. This allowed him to quickly identify areas of concern that needed to be highlighted for the client. The lawyer reviewed the report and delivered it to the client along with a brief matter summary twice a month. In turn, our client was able to use these reports to make informed decisions about scope to help them manage and ultimately lower their legal fees.

HANDS-ON APPROACH

This hands-on, data-driven approach to client reporting ensured that the client was cognizant of ongoing matters, and that Osler could proactively address and manage potential changes in scope and take pre-emptive action to avoid unnecessary or low-priority activities that could consume precious budget and resources.

For the client, having access to this level of data gave them unprecedented insight and control over their matters. They could hold Osler accountable to the scope and budget, but still make real-time decisions as the matter evolved and drove new but necessary requirements.