



OPERA SOLUTIONS SAVES HOURS A WEEK ON A **GROWING IMMIGRATION PROGRAM**



HIGHLIGHTS

OPERA SOLUTION'S TOP CHALLENGES

- The organization needed an immigration partner to help manage a scaling workforce
- HR was spending too much time fielding questions from increasingly concerned foreign national employees
- A traditional law firm's unpredictable pricing made it difficult to forecast immigration strategically

A leader in predictive analytics, Opera Solutions combines data, machine learning science and technology to innovatively capture value for organizations. Opera helps solve specific business problems and opportunities for clients in a variety of major industries, and the company's software solutions directly address the problem of scaling Big Data analytics.

INDUSTRY

Information Services

HEADQUARTERS

New Jersey

VISAS SPONSORED

Green Cards, L's, H-1B's

ENVOY CUSTOMER SINCE

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Tim Bridges is Senior Vice President at Opera Solutions, where he leads the human resources organization as well as the Solutions Group. Tim has been with Opera for 12 years, joining when the firm had less than 80 employees. Today, he manages all the people out working with clients, delivering solutions into their environments, as well as the HR function for Opera. And even though he had roughly two-thirds of the Opera workforce reporting to him when he took on the immigration function for the company about two years ago, he had never thought about that side of HR, recruiting and hiring.

Immigration management, he says, has been a great addition to his career. "It's given me a lot to learn and a lot of new responsibilities." But it's also given him a new perspective on the meaning behind immigration – "what the real impact is for a person's personal life and what it means to their family, and what it also meant to the firm overall."



THE SITUATION

When he did initially take over immigration at Opera, the company was working with a traditional law firm in New York. He inherited a relationship with this firm that the organization had been partnered with for years to manage immigration. About a year and a half into moving into that role, Tim and his team started to wonder about **the scalability of a small law firm as the organization was growing**. "Our needs were getting to the point where we were worried about our volume with this other firm," he says. "We needed to have an existing relationship with someone else to be able to move the volume to."

Opera's changing needs weren't just about scale either. "As the HR team, we were spending a lot of time just answering questions and fielding inquiries from the people who were going through the process," he admits. **The triaging responsibilities of HR was taking valuable time out of his team's day**, making it harder to balance other critical tasks.

The move to find new, scalable legal partners was already underway on the litigation team, so Tim took on the responsibility of finding a new partner with growth potential. "I was looking for something that would give us a bit more access or ability to look at things without always having to do it through email or phone calls," he tells us. "And that's how we ran across Envoy."



ONE CENTRAL PLACE FOR HR, EMPLOYEES, AND ATTORNEYS

The first savings Tim and his team noticed once they switched to Envoy was time. Having a cloud-based portal where employees could check the status of their own cases and information all in one place meant that there were no lengthy phone calls or email chains. No more digging through emails and paperwork to find documentation. And no one had to stop into the HR office to make sure something was sent to the attorneys. It was all done through the Envoy portal.



SIGNIFICANT TIME SAVED

For a small HR team that's scattered across the globe, sometimes with two people running HR for a particular country, that time savings means a lot. "That 10 or 15 minutes a day just gives that time back to my staff," Tim says. "Even if we're getting two or three hours a week – for a small staff, that's a significant part of their time." The time the HR team has gotten back translates directly to increased productivity in the department.



SETTLING EMPLOYEE ANXIETY

Throughout the past year to 18 months, the organization has experienced challenges with immigration policies and decisions. L visas that his team used to be able to secure in the early days with Envoy are not always accepted because of more stringent government processing. Additionally, with the increase of RFEs for H-1B petitions and the general tension of the political climate, employee anxiety becomes a larger issue and results in increased questions directed to HR and attorneys. Fortunately, Tim has been able to establish a certain level of control over those anxieties – helping to keep employees calm.

The Envoy Communication Center allows employees to ask their questions and address their concerns directly with an Envoy-affiliated attorney. Because trust is essential to reassuring employees about their own case, having direct access to legal advice when employees need it is key. Though Tim and his team can answer a lot of questions his employees have, they're not legal experts. They rely on the employee-attorney relationship the Communication Center enables: "Talking to the attorneys helps," he says. "To hear from an attorney is just more calming than hearing it from me."

"The triaging responsibilities of HR was taking valuable time out of his team's day"



SCALE IS POSSIBLE WITH FLAT-RATE BILLING

In a political environment where anxieties around immigration are high, and the questions are constant, Tim is glad to have an immigration technology partner that doesn't charge by the hour. "Having a set model," he says, "is very helpful for me to be able to budget and say, 'I know what it's going to cost.'" That set cost model applies to cut-and-dry as well as complex cases. It's all rolled into one flat rate. "I find it to be a much easier way to deal with than the traditional, 'I'm going to bill you for 15 minutes of my time' approach."

The set cost model that Envoy offers makes it easier to think about scale. With it, Tim can easily determine how many visas he will be able to run in the upcoming year. Understanding the budget makes forecasting simple and possible, even when there's growth.

