

FOCUS ON LEGAL PUBLISHERS AND SUPPLIERS

Wolters Kluwer: 184 Years of Knowledge Innovation

Abstract: Wolters Kluwer is a global provider of professional information, software solutions, and services for customers in more than 180 countries. It employs approximately 19,000 people worldwide and has annual revenues of €4.6 billion of which 89% are derived from digital products and services. The company's roots can be traced back to the nineteenth century and to the merger of four entrepreneurial, family-run Dutch publishing houses: Wolters, Noordhoff, Samsom, and Kluwer. Throughout its 184-year history, Wolters Kluwer has adapted to a significant amount of environmental, cultural, and technological change, not the least of which was digitalization. It expanded internationally through numerous acquisitions and moved deeper into data and analytics. The company's four operational divisions - Health, Tax & Accounting, Governance Risk & Compliance and Legal & Regulatory - now aim together to achieve goals under a strategy entitled Accelerating Our Value. Those goals are three-fold: to grow expert solutions, to advance deep domain expertise and to drive operational agility. Today Wolters Kluwer is a data-driven, highly customer-experience-focused organization that continues to apply advanced technologies to complex problems. The author, David Bartolone, VP and General Manager, for the International Group within Wolters Kluwer's Legal and Regulatory, U.S. unit, describes Wolters Kluwer's history as well as the current organizational structure, and vision for the future. In addition, he draws upon his recent experience to describe Wolters Kluwer's international legal business.

Keywords: law; tax; accounting, healthcare; risk; compliance; data; analytics; digitalization; information technology; legal information; legal publishers; Wolters Kluwer

PREFACE

In 2009 I was tasked with picking up my daughter from school where, at the time, she was soldiering through pre-kindergarten (reception). As I waited by the door with the teacher, she commented on how interesting it was that I worked for Ikea. She must have confused me with another dad, I thought, but my daughter had indeed told her that I worked for that famous Swedish designer and purveyor of ready-to-assemble furniture. Upon reflection, I suppose that describing her dad's job as General Manager of a Wolters Kluwer business unit – one that provides practitioners who advise on the legal aspects of cross-border commercial matters with the necessary tools to help navigate the increasingly global aspect of law – might have been a bit ambitious for a four-year-old. And, in her defense, she did see me put together a lot of furniture upon moving from the U.S. to The Netherlands. A decade and three more children later, I'm still waiting for my invitation to the school's Career Day. In the absence of that

invitation, I eagerly accepted BIALL's to tell the story of Wolters Kluwer.

ABOUT WOLTERS KLUWER

Wolters Kluwer is a global provider of professional information, software solutions, and services for clinicians, nurses, accountants, lawyers, and other personnel in the tax, finance, audit, risk, compliance, and regulatory sectors. Wolters Kluwer reported 2019 annual revenues of €4.6 billion. The group serves customers in more than 180 countries, maintains operations in more than 40 countries, and employs approximately 19,000 people worldwide. The company is headquartered in Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands. Our range of expert solutions combines deep domain knowledge with advanced technology and services to deliver better outcomes, analytics, and improved productivity for our customers. Our priority is to provide timely, actionable insights in an end-to-end digital environment – insights that empower customers to make informed decisions.

WOLTERS KLUWER: A HISTORY

1836–1917

During the 19th century, constitutional and legal reforms were shaping a loose collection of Dutch provinces into a modern industrial economy. The demand for educational and informational literature led to the rise of numerous family-run publishing houses. Wolters Kluwer's roots can be traced directly to four entrepreneurial houses: Wolters, Noordhoff, Samsom, and Kluwer.

In 1836 Jan Berends Wolters founded his bookstore-publishing house in Groningen, in the north of The Netherlands. Later to be called the J.B. Wolters Publishing Company, the company met with unparalleled success in educational publishing due to his focus on high-quality content that would shape the rapidly evolving sphere of education. Generations of Dutch children, for example, learned their ABCs with *Aap-Noot-Mies*. And the children's stories of *Ot en Sien* published in 1902 remained a ubiquitous teaching tool in elementary schools for half a century.

In 1858 a 25-year-old Popko Noordhoff opened a bookstore next door to the 50-year-old Wolters. Initially stocking education, science, and religious books, he soon switched to publishing and would see great success with titles such as Heukels' *Flora in the Netherlands*, which, remarkably, reached its 23rd edition in 2016, and is available now as an app. Building from a national base, Noordhoff would go on to achieve international acclaim in scientific publishing.

In January 1886, with the full support of his bosses, Nicolaas Samsom left the civil service to run his eponymous publishing business full-time. As Secretary Receiver at the Alphen aan den Rijn Town Hall — the current location of the Wolters Kluwer Global Headquarters — Samsom built a reputation as an early innovator. He adapted complex legislation into more easily understood language for readers. He redesigned forms and formats to be more easily managed and updated. And, in an early example of direct marketing, he created a free monthly magazine to keep customers up-to-date. Samsom's customer-first philosophy helped build a loyal base. Highly trusted by his former bosses, customers, and industry peers alike, he moved into commentary, analysis, and later, into the fields of tax and education.

In 1891 former bookseller Æbele E. Kluwer established his publishing house in Deventer, in the east of The Netherlands. From the outset Kluwer established a clear vision: "Publish great quality content, or don't publish at all!" He achieved enormous success in education, then tax, business, technical, and scientific publishing. He developed a deep network of subject experts and authors. And he experimented with new ways to bring content alive, such as with a pop-up book for his medical publications. In 1909 the *De Vakstudie* series (still being published today by Wolters Kluwer) was the first of its kind to provide a range of fiscal advisors with up-to-date legal advice and analysis in fiscal matters.

Toward the end of the century, all four houses had cemented national reputations. They had built excellent

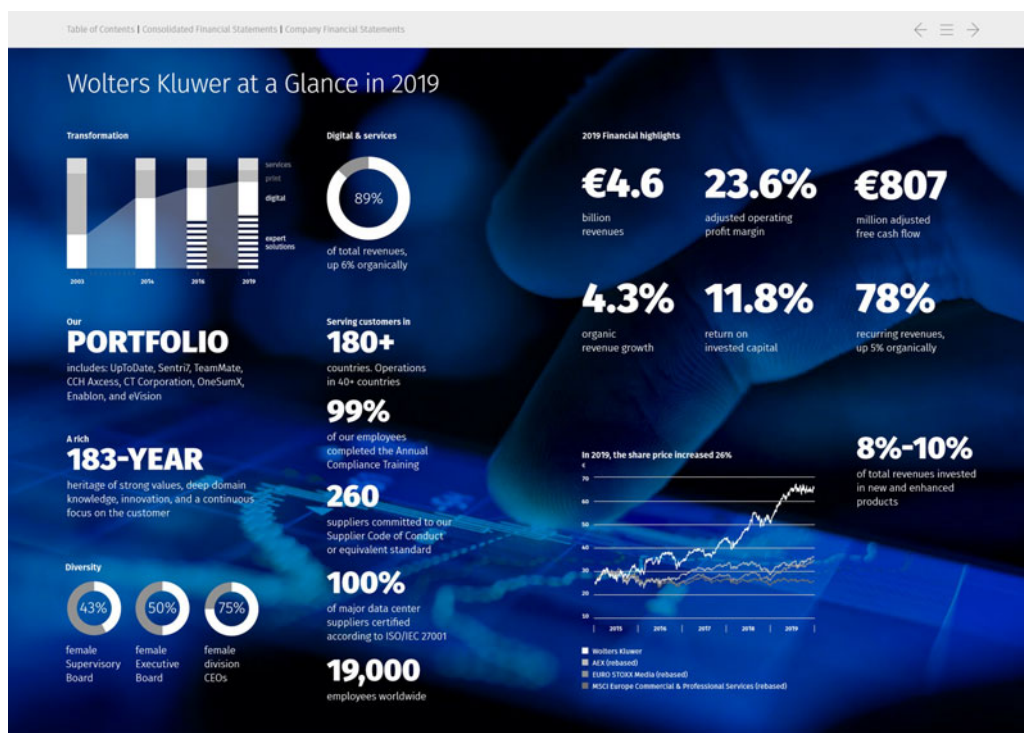


Figure 1: Wolters Kluwer at a glance.

relations with the Dutch government and municipalities, business, and academic institutions—as well as a strong, trusted network of experts and authors.

1918–1987

At the turn of the century, the Western world was gripped in a reading frenzy. Print production, marketing, distribution, and consumption changed radically. In the coming decades Wolters, Noordhoff, Samsom, and Kluwer would navigate the Depression of the 1930s, a slew of post-war commercial and social developments, and emerging electronic publishing technologies. Eventually, all four houses would merge under one roof.

In 1918 the Wolters family took the company limited. Dr. Anthony Schepman, a respected intellectual, philanthropist, and innovator, was appointed the first CEO—a position he was to hold for 40 years. Former banker F.R. ter Horst was appointed managing director. Under their leadership, combining strong business and subject matter expertise, the company expanded rapidly.

In 1968 J.B. Wolters merged with Noordhoff to form Wolters-Noordhoff. While Wolters was nearly three times the size of Noordhoff, the neighbors understood that to remain competitive, they would have to put much more emphasis on the development of new books—and find new, innovative ways of promotion and public relations. The merger was celebrated by literally breaking down the wall that had separated their offices for almost 100 years.

In 1970 Samsom merged with A.W. Sijthoff to form the Information and Communication Union (ICU). Just two years later, Wolters-Noordhoff would also merge with the ICU. Then, in 1983, the ICU changed its name to Wolters-Samsom. In that year 35% of the group's sales came from Belgium, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Plus, thanks to an early focus on emerging electronic technologies, the company was already on its way to full internal digitization by 1984.

By the mid-1980s Kluwer was the only one of the original four houses to remain independent. It had built strong footholds in the United States, Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, and the United Kingdom. It had opened its first office in China in 1985, and that office focused on law, tax, and accounting. All told, Kluwer's markets included professional and business, legal and fiscal, science and technology, education, and literature.

In 1987, to fend off a takeover bid from Elsevier, Kluwer merged with Wolters-Samsom. Kluwer cited too much of a difference in business philosophy to merge with Elsevier. But with Wolters-Samsom they found many commonalities in market ambition, company culture, and values—some things that would remain at the heart of the company until the present day. And so, Wolters Kluwer NV was established.

1988–2001

During the 1990s, Wolters Kluwer realized at least 15% annual average profit growth. Numerous acquisitions of

traditional and electronic companies fueled international expansion. However, the rise of the internet was as disruptive as anything the company had yet faced. It required fresh thinking and a new start. By 2001, the company had mapped the path to sustainable growth.

The late 1980s to the mid-1990s would see the company extend its global footprint. In 1989 Wolters Kluwer began to expand throughout Europe and by 1996 it had established a presence in Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, Spain, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and West Germany. At the same time, between 1990 and 1998, the acquisition of numerous prestigious companies would fortify the company's market position in the United States:

- The acquisition of J.B. Lippincott and Co.—which had published the first textbook of nursing in 1878, as well as the first issue of the *American Journal of Nursing*—made the company a major player in the U.S. health market by 1990.
- In 1996 the Company completed the purchase of CCH Inc., which had published materials on U.S. tax law and tax compliance since the inception of the federal income tax in 1913. This purchase helped expand the company's business in Asia-Pacific due to CCH's interests in Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.
- And in 1998 Wolters Kluwer acquired Ovid Technologies, an electronic pioneer with an interface to MEDLINE, the U.S. National Library of Medicine®, and the world's largest and oldest medical database.

In 1995 the Wolters Kluwer Executive Board announced new investments in e-publishing and the still nascent internet. In 1997 a CTO was appointed, and a start made with Kluwer Online. A global steering group of bright young managers soon helped sharpen the company's customer focus and global internet strategy. But operationalizing the strategy would be complex. And the financial implications were huge.

In the same year Wolters Kluwer entered merger negotiations with Reed Elsevier. However, the two companies could not agree on financial terms. Discussions were terminated in March 1998.

In 2001 the company announced its intent to create a new 21st century Wolters Kluwer. While the strong, historic customer focus would remain, the new direction would be toward content, software, and services. An ongoing company-wide program would empower a new rank of innovative leaders. After one of the most disruptive periods in its history, the company was poised to deliver in the new millennium.

2002–Today

After the dot-com bust of 2000, the Digital Age began in earnest. It was a period of immense technological and informational change, impacting businesses and customers alike. In 2003, under new leadership, and

acknowledging the speed of change, Wolters Kluwer adopted its first three-year strategy cycle. By 2010 the company's portfolio would be fundamentally transformed.

In September 2003 Nancy McKinstry was appointed Wolters Kluwer's Chief Executive Officer. With Wolters Kluwer for a decade, McKinstry combined deep company knowledge with sharp strategic, operational, and technological acumen. She was the first non-Dutch person to take a seat on the Wolters Kluwer board and its first female CEO. In the following years McKinstry would lead the company through a radical restructuring and business improvement plan.

By 2010, under McKinstry's leadership, the company's portfolio had been fundamentally transformed. Wolters Kluwer generated almost 70% of its revenues from online, software, and service offerings—a milestone in the company's history.

Throughout this time, Wolters Kluwer's professional markets continued to see enormous change. The proliferation of data, information, and regulation, and the unification of global standards and compliance rules, were putting the company's customers under increasing pressure. And digital devices were about to hit the mainstream.

The year 2012 saw the company focus full-force on maximizing its value for customers. Building from its position in digital software and deep domain knowledge, Wolters Kluwer moved deeper into data and analytics. This helped the company deliver value directly at the point-of-use—directly into customer workflows—via any number of mobile devices.

The company's internal Global Innovation Awards and user-centric development programs gathered momentum. Together, they would inspire product enhancements such as UpToDate Anywhere, and new products such as CCH Axcess—the tax and accounting profession's first modular cloud-based tax preparation, compliance, and workflow solution.

In 2013 the company consolidated its global positioning with a unified brand strategy. The new tagline “When you have to be right” perfectly illustrated the company's ongoing commitment to solving customers' challenges—and, of course, acknowledging their need to make critical decisions with confidence.

Ongoing strategic acquisitions such as Health Language and Prosoft Tecnologia, a Brazilian provider of tax and accounting software purchased in 2013, strengthened the company's portfolio. In 2015 Wolters Kluwer ELM (Enterprise Legal Management) Solutions was formed by the merging of Datacert with Tymatrix, making Wolters Kluwer the undisputed global ELM market leader—while the company celebrated a historic milestone of 30 years of doing business in China.

By the end of 2015, through its four divisions of Health, Tax & Accounting, Governance Risk & Compliance, and Legal & Regulatory, Wolters Kluwer served customers in more than 180 countries, maintained operations in more than 40 countries, and employed 19,000 people worldwide.

Digital products and services now represented 83% of the Company's total revenues.

THE WOLTERS KLUWER LEGAL & REGULATORY DIVISION

As mentioned above, Wolters Kluwer includes four operational divisions: Health, Tax & Accounting, Governance Risk & Compliance, and Legal & Regulatory. Given my role within Legal & Regulatory, I'll delve into the priorities and organizational structure of this important Wolters Kluwer vertical. The division primarily caters to law firms, corporations and corporate legal departments, universities, and government agencies with expert information enriched with advanced technologies to enable legal and compliance professionals to improve productivity and performance, mitigate risk, and solve complex problems. The division has operations in North America, Europe, and Asia and is organized around a regional/country structure led by Stacey Caywood, CEO, Wolters Kluwer, Legal & Regulatory. The portfolio contains many well-known brands, including Kleos, One, Cheetah, Enablon, eVision, IPSOA, Iter, Jura, LaLey, Lamyline, LEX, Legisway, Navigator, NotaioNext, and Wolters Kluwer Online.de.

The types of offerings vary from an end-to-end practice management software tool (Kleos), which is the leading cloud-based legal practice management solution in Europe, to a workflow tool specific to Italy (One). This latter product provides Italian law firms with all of the content and services necessary to manage their entire workflow. It includes news, legislation, jurisprudence and administrative tools, business information, doctrine of commentaries, journals, books, legal encyclopedias, and e-learning as well as software tools. In the U.S., Cheetah is a legal research solution designed in partnership with customers; it offers an intuitive way to access the highly regarded content for which Wolters Kluwer is known.

The Legal & Regulatory division also offers environmental health and safety compliance software such as Enablon, eVision Software, and Verifield which help health and safety professionals enhance the safety culture within their organizations. For example, Verifield can be used to record and manage dangerous situations or accidents, as well as guide professionals through safety and environmental audits via the integration of legislation and user-friendly lists of questions.

Kluwer Law International b.v.

Within the Legal & Regulatory division, I manage a unique business unit with a niche focus on providing information and solutions to those legal practitioners advising on, or researching, aspects of commercial cross-border transactions. Kluwer Law International (or KLI, as it's affectionately known internally) has 45 employees who form a diverse, multicultural team

located primarily in the corporate headquarters in Alphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands, but also in London and Mexico City. The history of the business unit mirrors that of the larger Wolters Kluwer as it was the result of the merger in 1995 of three separate businesses: Kluwer Law & Taxation (Deventer, NL); Graham and Trotman (London, UK); and Martinus Nijhoff (Dordrecht, NL). From 1995 through 2002, Kluwer Law International was part of a larger business known as Kluwer Academic Publishing, which was divested to Springer in 2003. However, an executive team in New York working for what was then called Aspen Publishers, Inc., lobbied to have the Kluwer Law International group carved out of the divestiture in an effort to enter the world of international law. Today, that business is referred to as Wolters Kluwer Legal & Regulatory U.S. and, true to their vision in 2003, we have established ourselves as their international arm.

Our products and services provide legal practitioners, corporate counsel, and business executives around the world with comprehensive international English-language legal information. The business is known globally for producing products and services that cross boundaries and jurisdictions, with information, insights, and tools that enable professionals to navigate the increasingly global aspect of law.

Our customers are primarily legal professionals practicing in global and large national law firms, and in-house counsel at corporations with operations in multiple jurisdictions. A key corporate customer segment is intellectual property professionals within companies heavily involved in research and development, including industries such as telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, energy, and electronics. In addition, students and faculty at colleges and universities with law programs, value our products and services.

The legal practice areas that represent our focus and passion include international commercial arbitration, intellectual property, competition law, and international tax. Additional focus areas include corporate and commercial law, law of the European Union, transport law including air and space, comparative law, and international labour law.

A WORLD OF CHANGE

At this point it's worth noting that a business can only thrive for 184 years by adapting to a significant amount of environmental, cultural, and technological change. Digitalization, for example, had a profound impact on the daily work of professionals in virtually every industry.

Wolters Kluwer combines almost two centuries of deep domain knowledge with specialized technology to create expert solutions that open countless performance

and productivity opportunities for businesses and the wider economy. At Wolters Kluwer we enable professionals in the healthcare, legal, and financial sectors to get the most out of technological innovations. Accordingly, our tools are fully and seamlessly integrated into professionals' workflows. They enable professionals to make the best decisions and achieve optimal outcomes for their clients and patients. Our solutions free professionals from the burden of mundane or repetitive tasks while boosting their productivity and effectiveness within their organizations.

Wolters Kluwer is a data-driven, highly customer-experience-focused organization that supports businesses in their transformation and helps them adapt to changing customer behavior and market dynamics. At Wolters Kluwer we put our customers at the center of everything we do with full commitment to continuous improvement and innovation. Technology is a major driver of change and our solutions help companies adapt so they continue to thrive. By combining artificial intelligence technology with our data assets, we create solutions that offer actionable information for use by doctors, lawyers, accountants and other professionals in the legal, healthcare, and financial industries. Our tools help drive new business, retention, and other crucial business elements that allow professionals to become vastly more effective and efficient.

STRATEGY

Despite the complex evolution of Wolters Kluwer, today the corporation is unified under a three-year strategy, *Accelerating Our Value*. The strategy comprises three pillars: growing expert solutions, advancing deep domain expertise, and driving operational agility. Working alongside our customers, we will continue to apply advanced technologies to address complex problems. This business strategy will fuel our success and drive our day-to-day operations through 2021.

SUMMARY

When I first took a job with Wolters Kluwer 25 years ago in a small suburb of Washington, DC called Gaithersburg, Maryland, I did so completely unaware of the impact of our work. Older and wiser, I can appreciate the knowledge that, every second of every day, our customers have to make critical decisions that affect the lives of millions of people and shape society for the future. Our purpose is to help customers deliver deep impact in the moments that matter most. Our efforts protect people's health and prosperity and contribute to a safe and just society.

Biography

David Bartolone is Vice President and General Manager for the International Group at Wolters Kluwer Legal & Regulatory U.S. Based in Wolters Kluwer's global headquarters in The Netherlands, he leads the overall strategy and vision for the international business. His business unit is known globally for crafting products and services that cross boundaries and jurisdictions, with information, insights, and tools that enable professionals to navigate the increasingly global aspect of law. David has 25 years of experience in the professional information industry, with expertise in general management, product development and management, sales, and marketing.

Legal Information Management, 20 (2020), pp. 22–25

© The Author(s) 2020. Published by British and Irish Association of Law Librarians

doi:10.1017/S1472669620000055

MORE PAPERS FROM THE BIALL CONFERENCE 2019

Are User Surveys Fit for Purpose? A Case Study on the Use of a Contingent Valuation Survey at Middle Temple Library

Abstract: In this article, based on a presentation at the BIALL Annual Conference in 2019, Renae Satterley and Adam Woellhaf discuss the methodology and potential effectiveness of using contingent valuation surveys in law libraries. Their approach is based on the Middle Temple Library's experience of running such a survey in 2018.

Keywords: surveys; law libraries; Inn of Court libraries

INTRODUCTION

Middle Temple is one of the four Inns of Court, which are responsible for calling men and women to the Bar in England and Wales. The Library cooperates with the other three Inn libraries to cover the full range of topics in English law. The specialisms at Middle Temple include, but are not limited to: arbitration, competition law, employment law and maritime and shipping law. In addition, we specialise in the European Union and law of the EU member states, and the law of the United States.

This article discusses Middle Temple Library's experience in running a contingent valuation survey for two months in 2018 in order to assess how members valued the library's services. We had run traditional user surveys in the past with limited success: response rates were low and from direct interaction with our members we already knew that they were satisfied with the services we offered, and were aware of what additional services

they required. We did not have a sense, however, of how, and to what extent they valued the library and its services, and whether this value could be expressed in financial terms.

In this article the authors examine the usefulness of running a contingent valuation survey, and whether it is a better type of survey to use when evaluating the services of law libraries than the traditional user experience survey.

WHAT IS CONTINGENT VALUATION METHODOLOGY?

Contingent valuation (CV) is a means of discovering the economic value of non-market goods. It was originally developed to assess the value of environmental protection services. The CV method asks respondents to answer a survey about the valuation of a public good. A