

THE CASE OF

Resolve Dispute Online

ONE-STOP SHOP DISPUTE RESOLUTION

March 2022

Key facts and figures



Year of establishment

2016



Scope of service

**ODR, Access to Justice
in the B2B Sector**



Geographical scope

Global



Legal entity

Private company



Regulatory
embeddedness

**Independent of
the government**



Number of affiliated
staff members

30



Citizen satisfaction

4 out of 5



Citizen impact reporting
score

75%



Number of cases resolved

30



Costs of services for citizens

US\$200
Tiered retainer



Average processing time

2 weeks to 2 months depending on complexity, compared to an average of 3-5 years for real estate disputes in the Kenyan courts

Introduction

Resolve Disputes Online is a dispute resolution software that professionals, courts, tribunals, and Ombudsmen who provide alternative dispute resolution methods can use. Founded by Aditya Shivkumar and Joe Al-Khayat in 2016, Resolve Disputes Online has evolved from being a one stop stop dispute resolution centre that provides services to individual customers to being a dispute resolution software that hosts negotiation, mediation and arbitration. The software's features include a case management system, secure file sharing, encrypted communications, brand integration and reporting of key statistics and performance indicators. Currently, Resolve Disputes Online has clients in the USA, South America, Africa, Australia and South East Asia. They include banks, insurance companies, solo practitioners, ombudsmen, alternative dispute resolution centres, courts and tribunals.

Operating method

Resolve Disputes Online provides a software solution to businesses who in turn provide dispute resolution services to individual customers. In theory, it is a B2b2C business, but the company's main clients are

businesses. So, the company experience's an enterprise sales cycle where negotiating with the customer and closing the deal takes upto three months. The Global Head of Sales gives a demo to the customer as a first step. Then, the Head of Product Development and Global Head of Sales interact with the customer to understand their requirements - this is the diagnosis phase. Then Resolve Disputes Online makes a plan to configure their software solution to match the needs of the customer. Once the customer is satisfied with the solution that is being offered, the two parties sign the contract. Thereafter, Resolve Disputes Online install the software in the IT systems of the client.

Post installation, there is a two week period in which Resolve Disputes Online provides User Acceptance Testing. Here, the company trains the staff of the client company in using the software. Resolve Disputes Online encourages the client company to group its staff in user groups and assigns them different roles in relation to the product to ensure that the staff of the client company becomes familiar with the software. After that, the client can make the software public to its end consumers for the purpose of dispute resolution.

For the duration that the client uses the software, Resolve Disputes Online provides them technical support. The company

supports the client in relation to technology-based queries, any further configurations required in the software and in resolving the end consumer's problems. For example, if the claimant and the defendant - who are the customers of the client to whom Resolve Disputes Online is providing the software - have a problem in using the platform, they need to go to the client company. They are the end consumer's first point of contact. If the client company is unable to resolve the problem, it forwards it to the technical support team of Resolve Disputes Online. If the problem is not resolved by the technical support team, then the Product Development team of Resolve Disputes Online takes care of it.

Therefore, unlike online dispute resolution platforms that provide services to consumers (B to C) where the consumer for the most part learns to use the platform on their own, Resolve Disputes Online has to hand hold the client for the entire duration of their collaboration.

Scaling

In 2011, the founders started off by providing mediation services in the UK via an online platform to consumers. Within three years, they realised that the market for this service was not ripe yet. This led them to develop Resolve Disputes Online that provides an online software for businesses instead of individual consumers. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the demand for online dispute resolution as a result of which the demand for ready-made dispute resolution software increased. Along with courts, tribunals and business, of late, solo practitioners have also begun using Resolve Dispute Online's software. To sum up, Resolve Disputes Online has a clientele that includes courts, tribunals, alternative dispute resolution centres, banks, insurance companies, fast moving consumer goods companies and solo practitioners from all over the world.

In the past one year, Resolve Disputes Online has also moved from being a customisable software to a configurable software as a result of which it can provide its products a diverse clientele. In short, adapting the product is also helping Resolve Disputes Online in achieving scale.

Financial Sustainability

Initially, when the company offered B to C services, it was entirely funded by the two co-founders and had to tackle scarcity of funds. Once Resolve Disputes Online began providing B to B services, it attracted more users as well as funds from investors. Over a period of time, Resolve Disputes Online entered into stable partnerships with courts, tribunals, alternative dispute resolution centres from all over the world, which stabilised their revenue model.

Marketing

The founders have consciously chosen to not market their product, they prefer to rely on word of mouth publicity. They believe that given that the online dispute resolution industry is still up and coming, a good product will attract attention with ease. This is proved by the fact that the majority of the pilots that the company conducted for clients, eventually converted into large scale projects. Having said that, while the company does not engage potential customers on Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn, it does bring together important stakeholders via round table discussions to gain visibility and to create awareness about the merits of ODR.

Enabling Environment

A company like Resolve Disputes Online that provides software for dispute resolution is not as affected by rules and regulations as a platform that provides dispute resolution services would be. It has been able to function in different jurisdictions in the world with ease. However, for Resolve Disputes Online to scale exponentially, more courts, tribunals, and countries need to embrace online dispute resolution as one of the core components of the justice system.

Aditya Shivkumar, the co-founder of Resolve Disputes Online suggests

“Countries like India must have a centre, led by a chief justice innovation officer, that is dedicated to justice innovation in their formal justice system. The chief judicial innovation officer should promote innovation and technology in the justice system and the centre should be assigned the authority to digitise the rules and procedures of the formal justice system. This will also ensure uniformity, consistency and standardisation in the approach taken by courts in India when it comes to adoption of technology. For instance, a few Lok Adalats (alternative dispute resolution platforms) in India have begun using online dispute resolution technology, but not all. Similarly, the High Court in the state of Kerala went paperless in 2021, but the rest of the high courts in the country have not.”

Moreover, countries should set aside a separate budget to digitise the justice system which will enable them to purchase the softwares such as that of Resolve Disputes Online. For example, the UK government has earmarked 1 billion pounds to digitise court services. More initiatives like these where governments have the bandwidth to budget for online dispute resolution platforms, along with a centre that can institutionalise use of technology in the justice system are needed.

Lessons Learnt

The main lessons that can be taken from the experience of setting up Resolve Disputes Online is to adapt the product to fit the need and demand in the market. The first venture of the founders of Resolve Disputes Online was a B to C company that provided online, dispute resolution services such negotiation, mediation and arbitration. But in 2011, the market for online dispute resolution was not ripe. Therefore, the founders switched to providing a software solution to businesses, which had more takers than the previous B to C model.

Critical Success Factors

Factors that played a critical role in the success of Resolve Disputes Online are:

- Created a niche for themselves as service providers and catering to the government agencies as a clear product delivery option. Helped in scaling and creating a unique value proposition
- Looked beyond focusing on one jurisdiction to multiple jurisdictions - which helped in uniform product creation. This helped expand across countries. Which can be quite a win in the justice innovation sector which is usually quite geography specific.

Author: Manasi Nikam.

This exploratory piece is based on two interviews with founder Aditya Shivkumar, dated November 9, 2021 and January 21, 2022.

To learn more, read the [policy brief on One-stop Shop Dispute Resolution](#) or visit www.hiil.org and dashboard.hiil.org.