

## Thrivent Financial for Lutherans chooses Legal Files for file management, automated workflows and legal holds tracking

### Background

A Fortune 500 financial services organization, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans is a faith-based, not-for-profit membership organization with nearly 2.5 million members. As the nation's largest fraternal benefit society, Thrivent helps its members achieve financial security and give back to their communities.

### The Challenge

The organization has two main offices; one in Appleton, Wis., and one in Minneapolis. With no centralized, electronic case management system in place and with litigation team members in both offices, "Everyone just did their own thing," according to Alayne P. Russom, a senior paralegal in the organization's litigation department. "There was no calendaring; no to-do list. We tried using email as reminders, but things were forgotten; files were forgotten," she added. "We wanted, and needed, a case management system with a workflow system."

Russom was tasked with "getting Legal Files up and running." She set up a common naming system for all the files and began to teach the ins and outs of Legal Files to others in her group. "We started with a few features at a time—how to use email in Legal, how to use the to-do features, how to use the calendars," she said. "Then, it was, 'OK, this is working well. Let's start using something else,' and we went onto letter templates."

### The Results

As Thrivent had expected and hoped, team members began doing things more efficiently, now that they had the tools they needed; tools that Legal Files provided.

Communication and collaboration between the two offices improved. "Now we never have to question who's doing what, because it's already in Legal Files," Russom said.

Thrivent is also using Legal Files for outside counsel expense tracking, Russom said. "Previously, we would receive a bill from outside counsel. I would get it and look it and then put it into the attorney's in-box and he would look at it when he had time, then an administrative assistant would put it in a jacket and send it to Minneapolis for approval and payment. Now, I have outside counsel email invoices to me. I upload the invoice to the relevant file in Legal Files. Then I use Legal Files routing feature to send it to the

*"With Legal Files I have confidence that legal holds are being properly tracked."*

Alayne P. Russom,  
Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

### Customer Profile

#### Thrivent Financial for Lutherans

- Financial services organization
- Nation's largest fraternal benefit society
- 16 users

#### Challenge:

- No centralized, electronic system or process in place
- Communication and collaboration were lacking
- Team members were located in two, separate physical locations

#### Solution:

- Install and implement Legal Files Software, serving as "a central hub" for all users and file activity
- Automate workflow & reminders using Legal Files
- Eliminate paper files, saving time
- Customize program to track legal holds

#### Results:

- Work more efficiently, helping other business areas and business partners
- Eliminate paper files
- Eliminate the expense of a separate legal hold system and the time to learn another system

(more...)

attorney, with my notes attached. It is then routed from one person to the next. The whole process takes about a day now, instead of days or weeks," she said. "Additionally, we were able to take on work from other business areas. We helped our business partners more."

Thrivent team members extensively use Legal Files' document generation and document text searching, its integration with Microsoft Office, and Drag & Drop (to quickly insert documents into Legal Files).

### Love That

"My favorite feature is the integration with Office. Every day and everything we do involves Excel, Word or Outlook, and they all integrate so nicely with Legal Files," Russom said. "We don't even use paper files here at all anymore. We just use Legal Files. Everything goes into Legal Files."

For example, Russom create .pdfs of documents and then uses Legal Files' Drag & Drop to place the document into the appropriate file in Legal Files. It's so much easier and quicker than walking to the copier, making a copy and sticking it into a file," she said. "The best part is that recalling that information only takes seconds instead of the 30 minutes it used to take digging through a (paper) file. Love that."

Legal Files also makes working at home so much easier, Russom said. "I don't lug around a bunch of files," she said. "I take my laptop home and that's it."

### Program Flexibility – An Unexpected Benefit

However, not all the benefits were expected. Legal Files provided at least one *unexpected* benefit. Initially, Thrivent wasn't planning to use Legal Files for legal holds, Russom said. "We had been looking at tools to track and manage our legal holds," she said, "and every time I sat and watched a demo, I was thinking, Legal Files could do all this. We just need to customize it."

With some help from a Legal Files trainer, Russom designed a custom window uniquely suited to track and manage legal holds. "We created our own fields—if a legal hold has been placed, who the custodian is, if the legal hold has been acknowledged by the custodian, when the hold has been lifted, who the business partners are who are responsible for making sure the legal hold is in place." On her own, she then created the appropriate workflow wizards (to trigger reminders at specific intervals) and document templates (to generate legal hold memos). "We developed a whole process for legal holds using Legal Files ,up to and, including, the end of the cycle with a file closing procedure that reminds us to release the legal hold."

Thrivent also used the customization capability offered in Legal Files to create its own customized reports. "We needed to track specific information," Russom said. "We created a custom window to capture the information and now we just simply run the Custom Window Query Report."



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