

Wait Law Firm chooses Legal Files

More than a decade later, firm is still happy with its decision

Background

Wait Law Firm, in Reno, Nevada, is a civil litigation defense firm with extensive experience in products liability, premises liability, professional liability, aviation and commercial and complex litigation. Wait Law Firm has represented many national and international corporate clients in a wide variety of civil litigation for more than 40 years—and has been using Legal Files case management software for more than 10 years.

The Challenge

Back in 1997, firm owner, Eugene J. Wait Jr., tasked administrator, Shirley Taft Oar, with finding an automated system to help manage their practice. “We had software,” Shirley explained, “but calendaring was a separate system; phone calls were on pink slips; incoming mail wasn’t logged; everything was separate. There wasn’t one thing that tied it all together, and even if you could get the whole case file in your hands, it wasn’t in chronological order.”

The law firm wanted a system that could manage and track a variety of file types, plus items that weren’t related to cases or files. “Most importantly, we wanted a system that concentrated on the legal aspects of our jobs—not accounting. Accounting is the story of things past. We wanted an electronic system that was forward looking and made our practice more efficient. We were smart enough to realize that’s where our focus needed to be.”

The Results

“Legal Files is how we start our day,” Shirley said. “It tells us what we need to do and we do it.” The firm heavily relies upon Legal Files to stay organized, she said. “Legal Files makes us look good. We serve as local counsel for many out-of-state firms. They rely on us because we have things so well organized. I’ve actually had lawyers from much larger law firms call to ask about a critical date because they can’t find it in their system. We can find anything we need without getting up from our desks,” Shirley quipped. “It’s Legal Files that helps us stay competitive.

“We work as a team; different information is important to each player. Everyone in the office uses Legal Files to stay informed and to be more knowledgeable,” Shirley said. “No matter what kind of information a particular person requires—a phone log, a document, whatever—everyone has the access they need and everyone stays current.”

“I personally like how Legal Files is able to store and retrieve scanned attachments. You just access the file and pull up the attachment. It’s one

(more...)

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Shirley Taft Oar,
Wait Law Firm

Customer Profile

Wait Law Firm

- Civil litigation defense firm
- Legal Files customer for 10+ years

Challenge:

- Replace separate, disparate systems
- Need centralized system
- Focus on legal aspects of practice

Solution:

- Implement Legal Files software as central hub for all case and non-case related information
- Provide remote access to critical data
- Develop a consistent approach and standardize processes

Results:

- Retain and retrieve entire firm’s practice history, including documents and contacts
- Realize substantial return on investment because of dedication and commitment to using the system
- Benefit from having a relationship with a vendor who provides great service and continuity

less thing you have to track down or worry about misplacing. And, with Legal Files' search functions, it's virtually impossible to lose documents."

Not only is Legal Files able to handle the variety of cases the firm handles, but all kinds of interoffice files, including personnel files and private files as well. For example, Shirley said that the firm created an Office File for forms. (One of the numerous features available in Legal Files, Office Files may be used just like file folders in a cabinet, but with all of Legal Files' productivity features such as e-mail, reminders and documents attached to the file.) "Anyone can look for forms in that one file," Shirley said, "knowing that there's only one place to look, and that they're going to get the most current version available."

Legal Files also helps while you're out of the office. "I spent three weeks on vacation last year and I used the remote access Legal Files offered to know what's going on in the office. I spent an hour each day making sure everything was covered. I'm not sure that's a benefit or not," Shirley joked, "but it sure beats coming back to an overwhelming pile of papers or a ton of unanswered e-mails."

Using the system for such a long time has its advantages. "Of course, the information you get out of it gets better and better," Shirley said. "Our Legal Files database has our entire firm's practice history including years' worth of forms and documents. Plus, it's helped us develop a consistent approach and standardize our processes over time. Everyone knows where everything goes and what comes next."

Since most of the firm's business is from returning clients, Wait Law Firm uses Legal Files to keep track of those contacts and their prior involvements with the firm. "Our database of names is incredibly important," Shirley said. "It's probably bigger than our phonebook. Just the other day, Gene and I were joking about getting older. You start asking yourself, who is this person, have we worked together before, what was the name of that case we worked on? But, you don't have to rack your brain. Legal Files remembers everything for you."

Even with all the functions and features Legal Files offers, the best attribute the software possesses is the technical support behind it, Shirley said. "I can call or e-mail the Legal Files Help Desk and always get an immediate response. Recently we completed an upgrade to our network over a weekend, and the Legal Files support people were available by phone to help us. How many times have you bought a product only to have the salesperson leave the company shortly thereafter? Gordon Hack sold the product to us, and he still communicates with me at least twice a year. That's remarkable!"

Bottom Line

"We've had lawyers leave the firm and tell us they wished they still had Legal Files," Shirley said, "It would be very hard to continue without it. It's such a vital part of our practice."

The money, time and effort the firm put into the purchase and initial implementation of Legal Files has resulted in a great return on its investment. "I won't lie to you," Shirley said, "in the beginning it took dedication on our part, but now, everyday we're on our way. A product that keeps up with your practice, and a product that you can stay with is a good thing."

