

The Verdict is in: Law firm realizes ROI sooner than expected

Florida Attorney Russell Adler recently experienced an epiphany; one that might be a bit startling for small law firms that are used to the paper-intensive environment that surrounds litigation. "Why not turn the law offices of Karmin, Adler & Padowitz into a paperless, technology-advanced firm while reducing overhead expenses and gaining efficiency?" That's the concept he and partner Carl Karmin grappled with for years.

"We were tired of paying exorbitant amounts of money each month to maintain paper files including the labor and resources that went with it. We were feeling a bit out of control in general," says Adler. "We needed a solution for our common problems including misfiling or lost files and not receiving mail in a timely manner."

Today, Adler and his colleagues are solving these issues and more with Westbrook Technologies' document management software. In addition to saving about \$500 per month on office supplies and labor costs, the firm is also saving close to \$1,000 per month in copying and postage costs since all document production is now done via CD ROM. Additionally, they are now retrieving entire case files within 15 seconds including depositions, photos and documents. "Same day scanning is allowing our mail and files to be immediately available instead of having to work with incomplete, misplaced or lost files that may take up to a day to find, if at all," says Adler. He explains that an attorney and a secretary are assigned to each client so file sharing is paramount. "Now, we can search for a file by name, date scanned or description and instantly access everything from client correspondence to photographs."

Their document management system has also extended to long-term survival for the firm should a disaster occur. With south Florida prone to lightning strikes and hurricanes, this was critical for Adler and his associates. "Our ability to survive a system crash or data loss has been bolstered by our ability to digitally back up every file in this office and restore our system with a single back-up tape," he says. Additionally, the effect of hard drive crashes has been eliminated by the use of a RAID drive on their imaging server.

The ability to access the firm's files with the use of CD Express –the portable component that combines with their document management system – has also become a powerful business tool. "Being able to transport my files with CD Express is astounding. Even better, is my ability to connect to my office over the Internet and view all of my mail and files from anywhere in the world," he says.

The overall return on the firm's investment has Adler so thrilled that, while president of the Broward County Trial Lawyers Association, he dedicated the newsletter's "President's Message" column to sharing his excitement about the software and its benefits stating, "This solution has satisfied my insatiable appetite for technology". Adler says his phone continues to ring on a daily basis with questions from interested colleagues.

Industry: Legal

Company: The law offices of Karmin, Adler & Padowitz (founded 1990)

Location: Fort Lauderdale, Fla., U.S.A.

Size of Firm: Four lawyers, six support staff

Number of Clients: Over 500 clients

Business Metrics Impacted by Westbrook Technologies document management software:

- Disaster Recovery – file restoration with a single back-up tape
- Savings of \$12,000 per year in copying and postage costs
- Savings of \$6,000 per year in labor and office supplies
- Access files within 15 seconds
- File transporting with CD Express
- Connect and view all files via Internet

