



Philips Dictation Solution Solves Law Firm's Productivity Issue While Benefitting Lawyers and Staff



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It had been several years since the Tennessee law firm of Lewis, King, Krieg & Waldrop had considered buying a digital dictation solution when a vendor recommended Philips Dictation Solutions. The law firm had previously opted to stay with its cassettes and transcription equipment due to cost, but frustration with taped recordings had continued to grow among both the administrative staff and the lawyers.

Additionally, with two office staffs - one in Knoxville; one in Nashville - management wanted a way to improve overall efficiency and turnaround times by sharing resources and balancing transcription workloads. This prompted new interest in digital recording for an operational savings that justified the investment.

After a thorough evaluation of Philips digital solutions, the law firm of Lewis, King, Krieg & Waldrop implemented SpeechExec Enterprise in November 2008 to replace its outdated recording and transcription equipment.

In today's legal environment where speed matters, SpeechExec Enterprise enables quicker document creation - without having to increase the number of secretaries.

The law firm's new digital technology immediately satisfied the operational need to increase overall staff productivity by shifting work assignments among available transcriptionists at its two locations. If one office is swamped and the other is not, dictation files are easily accessed and transmitted to and from either site electronically.

Solving the resource balancing problem might have been the most urgent and obvious advantage for the firm's management, but both the lawyers and the administrative staff were to experience many more benefits just as significant.

Benefits from lawyers' point of view

Two years ago, attorney Glenn Walter was among the first lawyers receiving the Philips' dictation system. He likes the light feel of the recorder in his hand and finds the switch easy to handle, but the biggest improvement for him is that he no longer has to worry about losing any dictations.

"In the past when a tape broke or was accidentally erased, I lost several long dictations," he laments, "All of that work was for naught."

His frustration at having to change out tapes in the middle of a thought or an interview is also a thing of the past. "No more mechanical interruptions. I just push 'End' when I'm done," he says. "If I want to go back and add a section, that's easy too."

According to Walter, keeping up with all the tapes was difficult and such a waste of his time. However, even more problematic for him was trying to access a previous tape recording. "If you wanted to go back and make changes, you had to act fast to track it down before it was erased." The firm used to archive tapes for a period of time, but then they were gone forever. Walter appreciates how easy and reliable it is now to access his previous dictations and make any adjustments he deems necessary.

"The Philips' solution gives me the ability to serve my clients better because it makes my job easier," attorney Walter says.

It's particularly convenient when he is out of town. "Instead of hauling a box of tapes around with me for a week, Philips lets me transmit my recording back to the office from my laptop when I'm finished dictating. It's almost as efficient as dictating from my desk." The remote transmission capability also helps speed turnaround time since documents are often transcribed even before an attorney returns.



Philips Digital Pocket Memo 9600
and SpeechExec Enterprise Software

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Benefits from administrative staff point of view

Initially the firm provided the digital system to 12 of its 55 attorneys and plans to roll out to more a little at a time. "Personally, I can't wait for other lawyers to use it," says Linda Glasgow, PHR, human resources director for the firm. "It's so much easier for all of us than before.

"We get the dictation immediately and do not have to wait until someone hands it to us." That gives the staff more control over the pace and level of their workload during the day. Secretaries can access and begin work quickly as the assigned files become ready for transcription.

It's not just the workflow that has improved but also the quality of the recording. "It's a lot clearer with no fluctuation in volume," says secretary Julie May. "I transcribe faster when it's easier to hear the recording." Before, tapes could be inconsistent and difficult to understand, sometimes requiring multiple replays. We used to have to constantly pause the tape, now we control the recording with a foot pedal. Whether the fault of a weak battery, a worn tape or someone's speech pattern, in the past poor sound quality had hindered transcriptionists and wasted countless hours of administrative time.



"We used to really struggle to understand lawyers who mumbled or spoke softly when dictating their tapes. The Philips solution makes it easier to hear their words and transcribe their documents - even though they still speak the same!"

Linda Glasgow, PHR, human resources director



Linda Glasgow

"We used to really struggle to understand lawyers who mumbled or spoke softly when they dictated their tapes," says Glasgow. "Now it's easier to hear their words and transcribe their documents - even though they still speak the same!"

The Philips system enables individuals to set the playback speed that suits them and their ability. "We all work at different rates and this capability makes it more efficient for everyone," Glasgow adds.

The right choice for everyone

Transition to the new system was smooth - with one possible exception. One lawyer chosen for the first wave of digital dictation was adamantly opposed to the idea and not happy at all. She used to hold recorded tapes until they were full before giving them to her secretary. With the new method of recording and dictation, the secretary has instant access and emails her documents back much faster.

"The Philips' solution gives me the ability to serve my clients better because it makes my job easier."

Glenn Walter, attorney

After using the system, she changed her tune, Glasgow is happy to report. "She even emailed me an apology, stating that 'This is the best thing, it's more efficient, easier to use, and I love it.' It's nice to get feedback like that."

The biggest learning curve was for the administrative staff who had to familiarize themselves with the new software. They readily accomplished this with the help of Philips, and were proficient using the new system quickly.

Dictation was very similar to what the attorneys were already doing, so using the handheld recorder was intuitive. "For us, recording into the Philips system was exceedingly easy to learn," Walter says. "It took me no time at all."

Better quality in less time

Since the time when the law firm first implemented the Philips dictation solution, no one has measured the increased rate of productivity, but the firm realizes it's vastly improved. No one has tracked the number of hours the system has saved its transcriptions and its lawyers, but they know they are many. In fact, there's no meaningful record of ROI - except the firmly held opinion in the minds of all the users whose jobs it has made easier. And that is enough rationale for the firm to continue to roll out the system to more attorneys and to confirm the value of its technology decision.



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