

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Presented by:

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- Wisconsin Attorney – Marquette 1996
- Private Practice – 1996 to 1998
- Technology Consultant – 1998 to present
- Founder of three legal technology consulting firms
- Krause Practice Management assists law firms with a full range of technology needs
- IP Associates provides full day training seminars and custom practice solutions for Lexis Front Office Powered by Time Matters

WHAT
IS
PRACTICE
MANAGEMENT?

PRACTICE MANAGEMENT DEFINED

Practice Management is a system for managing and organizing ALL aspects of a matter, from intake to closing.

TRADITIONAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

- Separate “mini-systems”
- Many of these mini-systems were non-electronic
- Red Ropes with manila folders inside
- Card systems
- Paper calendars
- Documents saved electronically but not in always in an organized structure
- Billing often electronic but not tied to the other mini-systems

PROBLEMS WITH TRADITIONAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

- Disorganized – Information stored in too many places
- Slow – Information time consuming to locate and retrieve
- Confusing – Attorneys and staff need to be trained and have a thorough understanding of all of the mini-systems
- Non-productive – Disorganized, slow and confusing means loss of otherwise billable time

SEMI-MODERN PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

- Separate electronic (sometimes) mini-systems
- Email
- Calendar
- Tasks
- Document Management
- Billing
- Accounting

PROBLEMS WITH SEMI-MODERN PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

- Disorganized – Information stored in too many places
- Slow – Information time consuming to locate and retrieve
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MORE PROBLEMS

- Backup
 - Electronic mini-systems often have data stored locally on workstation computers
 - Typical backups cover data at the server only
- Accessibility
 - Locally stored data is difficult to share among users
 - Sharing of data among users is not the default

MODERN PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

- Single Integrated Electronic Database
- Fully integrated system for:
 - Calendar
 - Task Management
 - Contact Management
 - Matter Management
 - Document and Email Management
 - Other case related data
 - Billing
 - Accounting

CALENDAR

- Shared calendar allowing attorneys and staff to view, add and modify entries for others throughout the firm
- Ability to search and generate reports related to types of appointments, attorney and staff groups or a specific case
- Tickler system allows reminders of upcoming dates

TASK MANAGEMENT

- Assign tasks to yourself or to others
- Prioritize tasks
- Track the progress of the task
- Tickler system tracks upcoming and overdue tasks

CONTACT MANAGEMENT

- Track information about all of your firm's contacts – not just clients
- Customize fields to track information important to your firm including referral information or other marketing information
- Update contact information in one place and it will update throughout the application
- Search for and retrieve information quickly

MATTER MANAGEMENT

- Customize fields to track information specific to a case and for specific types of matters
- Track all of the important people related to a matter
- View all case related information in one place
- In some practice management applications, billing, accounts receivable and trust data is also viewable from the case

DOCUMENT AND EMAIL MANAGEMENT

- Save documents in a consistent, logical directory structure
- Documents are linked to the case allowing them to be opened from the practice management application by any user
- Important emails are linked to the case making them accessible by anyone
- Documents and emails are searchable within the system

OTHER CASE RELATED DATA

- Enter case notes regarding negotiations, research and other important information
- Track phone calls into and out of the office
- Link your phone system with caller ID and other features to your practice management system
- Save web links to important web sites, cases and statutes

BILLING

- Enter time in the same application that stores other case information
- Simultaneously create billing records from calendar entries, documents and other records
- Compare time entered on a day to other records created on that day to recover lost time
- Review time entered on a case

ACCOUNTING

- Some systems include accounting within the practice management application
- Integrated trust accounting
- Integrate costs and expenses from billing to accounting
- Allows reporting specific to your practice areas, staff and other criteria

THE
PRACTICE
MANAGEMENT
MARKETPLACE

THE PLAYERS

- Time Matters and Total Practice Advantage - LexisNexis
- ProLaw and ProLaw Ready – West
- Amicus Attorney – Gavel and Gown
- Practice Master – Software Technology, Inc.

INTEGRATION

- All of these products integrate with the most commonly used applications in the law office
 - Microsoft Office Suite
 - Microsoft Outlook
 - Adobe Acrobat
 - Word Perfect
 - Palms and other Smart Phones

NEXT GENERATION PRACTICE MANAGEMENT?

- Lexis has introduced what may be the next generation in practice management
- Practice Advantage is LexisNexis Time Matters with built in links and integration to online research, forms and other content
- This is a significant step that can realistically only be matched by West

PRACTICE
MANAGEMENT
CONSIDERATIONS

BUY-IN

- A practice management project requires coordination and cooperation from people in different positions throughout your firm
 - Make sure all of the necessary people are involved
- If you expect people in your firm to use your practice management application, they need to be convinced that it will help them in their everyday work
 - Keep them involved throughout the project from product selection to customization to data conversion to training

BUY-IN

- A practice management project is not successful unless people are actually using the product at the end
 - Training is critical
- Choose a project champion
 - This person should work with the vendor, the consultant and everyone in your firm to coordinate schedules and make sure that the project stays on track

COST

- The cost of the software is not the only cost
 - In fact, the cost of the software may be only 25% of the overall project cost
- Other costs to consider
 - Installation
 - Program customization
 - Training
 - Data conversion
- Do not be surprised if the total cost of a practice management project is \$15,000 or more

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- What is an hour of your time worth?
 - How many hours do you waste every ...
 - Day?
 - Week?
 - Month?
 - Year?
- Do the Math!
 - It is not uncommon to recover several hours per week for every person in the firm
 - $\$200 \text{ per hour} \times 5 \text{ attorneys} \times 2 \text{ hours} \times 52 \text{ weeks} = \$104,000$

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

- Know your Options
 - Demonstrations
 - Read reviews
 - Referrals
 - Chart the positives and negatives of each
- Use a Consultant
 - A consultant can help you make sense of the different choices
 - A consultant can give you an estimate of the total cost

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- <http://pm.lexisnexis.com>
- <http://www.amicusattorney.com/>
- http://www.tabs3.com/products/practicemaster/pm_overview.html
- <http://west.thomson.com/prolaw/>

- <http://www.krausepm.com>
- <http://blog.krausepm.com>