

Mid-size firm efficiently manages national litigation practice involving thousands of clients

Janet, Jenner & Suggs

Overview

Location: Baltimore, MD (main office), Asheville, NC and Columbia, SC

Industry: Legal Services

Customer Profile:

Janet, Jenner & Suggs, with its main office in Baltimore and satellite offices in North and South Carolina, is a mid-size firm that combines years of high-profile trial experience with state-of-the-art technology to maintain a practice with a national focus.

Business Situation:

Janet needed a way to manage thousands of client files and the many medical records associated with mass torts litigation.

Solution:

Janet turned to LexisNexis® Total Practice Solutions to automate records and coordinate document sharing with multiple law firms.

Benefits:

- Firm processes hundreds of thousands of documents smoothly and efficiently.
- Lawyers have access to documents no matter where they are.
- Multiple locations are able to share documents from one server.
- Potential staff needed to file documents reduced by as many as 30 people.

Product Summary

LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions

Practice Management

- Time Matters®

Litigation Services

- CaseMap®
- NoteMap®
- Concordance®

Client Development

- Martindale-Hubbell®

Janet, Jenner & Suggs, a 15-person firm with offices in Baltimore, MD, Columbia, SC and Asheville, NC, has a national presence in the worlds of medical malpractice and negligently marketed prescription drugs and medical devices. Firm members are on the Plaintiff's Steering Committee of the Hormone Therapy Multi-District Litigation, and have leadership roles in other mass torts. The firm is also recognized as one of the nation's leading advocates on behalf of babies who suffered brain injuries during labor and delivery, as well as other victims of medical negligence.

The firm may be relatively mid-size in terms of the number of attorneys, but it is a major player in the courtroom. Recent verdicts won for their clients include awards of \$15.5 million in Minnesota, \$13.5 million in Iowa and \$9.3 million in Minnesota for cases related to cerebral palsy developed due to brain injuries sustained during birth. Other major recoveries involved cases related to dangerous drugs and pharmaceutical products, including Baycol, Rezulin and others. The firm also has an active practice in business torts, recently obtaining a \$48 million jury verdict in a case concerning the interference with a business relationship.

Situation:

Janet, Jenner & Suggs routinely represents hundreds of clients in single mass tort cases. These cases entail keeping track of myriad records for each client, including calls, notes, contacts, e-mails and more. It is also necessary to monitor court-related documents, such as pleadings, interrogatories and motions, as well as milestone dates, like statutes of limitations and filing deadlines.

The number of documents involved in a mass tort suit runs to the millions. It is staggering to think of the amount of paper generated and the time and work it takes to process that paper. According to Robert K. Jenner, a partner in the firm, "It would take 30 people alone just to file all the documents

It would take 30 people alone just to file all the documents associated with the cases. Time Matters does it in less time with a fraction of staff.

associated with the cases.” Obviously, some form of automation was needed to efficiently process, store and manage all of those documents in a way that would provide all attorneys and staff in the firm easy access to whatever they needed when they needed it.

As if managing this quantity of data is not enough in and of itself, the firm actively collaborates with other lawyers and firms around the country who work together as part of the mass action. To make collaboration easier, the firm needs a solution that provides document access for all the attorneys working on the case. It is also necessary to have the documents accessible from remote locations, such as courtrooms and airports via laptops or portable devices like BlackBerry® or Palm® Treo™ handheld devices.

In addition to legal documents, the firm also has to collect and store many thousands of medical records for each client. Plus, the firm is aware that the medical records often contain compelling data that can substantiate the claims of the plaintiffs if presented in the right way. They look for a way to mine the data in the records that will make the information spring to life for a jury.

The ideal solution has several requirements. First, documents have to be processed and converted to an electronic format. Second, they have to be coded and organized in a way that makes them searchable and easy to locate, including links to related documents. Third, documents have to be accessible by all locations of the firm, as well other firms participating in the mass actions. This requires remote accessibility from a central location. Fourth, it is helpful if the documents can be used to create a chronology of events in the medical history of clients, as well as to prepare visual presentations of the data.

Cost and ease-of-use are also factors. The solution has to be affordable and relatively easy to install and maintain. Since the solution is used by lawyers and paralegals, it has to be relatively easy for non-technical people to learn. It also has to be scalable enough to handle anything from a few thousand records to many hundreds of thousands. Finally, it has to provide continuing customer support.

Fortunately, LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions provides just the right combination of products for Janet, Jenner & Suggs to manage its documents, collaborate with other firms and prepare effective and convincing presentations for the courtroom.

I have no idea at all how we would run our office without Time Matters.

Solution:

Janet, Jenner & Suggs turned to LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions, specifically, the Time Matters®, Concordance®, CaseMap® and NoteMap® software. They also use the Martindale-Hubbell® legal network to drive potential clients to the firm's own Web site.

Time Matters

When Rob Jenner joined the firm as a partner he was aware that document management was a concern. He has 23 years' experience in pharmaceutical litigation and knows that file organization is the key to a successful outcome. Having been introduced to Time Matters in a previous practice, he suggested that the firm's tech consultant take a look at it. Time Matters practice management software makes it possible to capture all information that a firm uses on a day-to-day basis in one software application. It can be used to view, track and manage information across the firm, including centralized scheduling, management of documents, checking for conflicts, tracking work progress and more. After seeing all the things Time Matters could do for them, Janet, Jenner & Suggs made the decision to install the software and they haven't looked back since.

A team of third-party consultants made the initial installation and got the firm up and running. Time Matters is customizable, so the program was developed with the special needs of the firm in mind. The many ease-of-use features built into Time Matters make it easy to learn. After receiving professional training by the firm's Time Matters consultant, the firm follows up with routine training and reinforcement internally.

As soon as a case opens and all related documents and information about it are loaded into Time Matters, the software and the automated process kick in. Tentative dates for litigation-related actions are inserted, which can easily be revised or made permanent as the case progresses. Paper documents are scanned to convert them to electronic format, while documents that are already in electronic format can be linked to the case. Documents include call records, notes, contact information, e-mails and more.

Janet, Jenner & Suggs actually uses multiple servers to address the storage and workflow needs for all three of its offices. The firm also maintains backup copies of the system on separate servers. Documents are coded and organized by matter, making them easily searchable in a variety of ways.

“Using Time Matters remotely is like working in the office.”

Heather Hill, Paralegal,
Janet, Jenner & Suggs, LLC

Given the nationwide scope of the firm’s practice, it is vital that documents can be easily accessed from multiple locations by all members of the firm and from any location that supports a wireless device. In addition to laptops, Time Matters supports a wide variety of wireless devices, such as BlackBerry or Palm Treo handhelds.

Considering the mobility of the firm’s lawyers and their regular use of wireless devices, it is vital that they be able to sync up with each other when there are changes to calendars, addresses, phone numbers, etc. Time Matters software makes it easy to integrate contacts, calendars and case files automatically. When a member of the firm makes a change, e.g., a new address or phone number for a witness, the new information is available to all members of the firm. All they have to do is sync up their devices. The same holds true for notes, call records etc., which are added to the matter record automatically. Synchronization can be done either wirelessly or through a hard-wire cable.

CaseMap and NoteMap Software

For their work on mass torts cases, the lawyers at Janet, Jenner & Suggs sometimes choose to work collaboratively with other firms. There can easily be hundreds of thousands of medical records involved in a large mass tort action with new records added daily. CaseMap case analysis software has enabled the firm to set up a nationwide system of sharing medical records and other documents. All the records are coded and may easily be retrieved by all the parties involved in the suit from multiple locations. Again, the documents are accessible via laptop.

Janet, Jenner & Suggs uses CaseMap both for mass torts cases and individual cases. It’s easy to organize events by key words and then create a chronology of events, for example, the client’s medical history. According to Heather Hill, a paralegal with the firm: “CaseMap is great about being able to pick out individual pieces of history. It gives you a 3-dimensional picture of the case, and things jump out that wouldn’t have otherwise.”

The firm also uses NoteMap outlining software, which is a companion program to CaseMap, to take notes in preparing for interviews, depositions and other applications.

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Developed specifically to help lawyers take notes and create outlines, Rob Jenner says that NoteMap is easier for him to use than word processing for taking notes. Notes taken in NoteMap can be easily exported to other programs like Microsoft® Word, WordPerfect® and PowerPoint®.

Concordance

Even though Concordance is generally thought of as a discovery organization tool, Janet, Jenner & Suggs uses it for a related application. The firm's specialization in medically related issues requires them to refer constantly to current medical and scientific literature. There are numerous online medical databases available, but they are often difficult to access and to search, especially from remote locations.

To solve this problem, the firm uses Concordance to create its own medical and scientific databases for use in mass torts cases. The firm uses Concordance® Image (formerly called Opticon™) to scan in both text and images of the literature and then store the databases on a central server where they are available to all members of the firm. Concordance discovery management software enables the firm to store more than 33 million records per database and to search more than 4 billion records at one time. The intuitive interface makes searching easy, even for novices.

The Janet, Jenner & Suggs staff can carry their Concordance databases around with them on a portable hard-drive providing instant access to thorough and relevant medical and scientific documents wherever they are. As Hill puts it, "When we are preparing for trial, I am never without my Concordance databases."

Benefits:

The benefits of LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions for Janet, Jenner & Suggs are obvious. The firm is able to participate in mass torts, class action suits, and represent thousands of clients without a hitch. The firm is able to do this without having to hire sizable numbers of support staff to process and maintain documents, track dates, coordinate between other firms all over the country and other administrative functions.

*I am never without
my Concordance
medical databases.*

In addition to cost savings from production and storage, Time Matters helps manage the entire litigation workflow more effectively. With everyone connected, many common problems with litigation can be minimized. Records of an interview or phone call, changes of address or phone number are automatically associated with the proper case. Automatic reminders help the firm stay on top of important milestones like filing deadlines and trial dates, which is particularly helpful for a firm that conducts litigation in multiple states. Setting To-Do's on a consistent basis helps the staff follow up on items that would otherwise get lost in the shuffle of papers. Do you have problems with staff follow-up on getting medical records, keeping connected with clients, or remembering to keep authorizations up-to-date? With Time Matters To-Do's, reminders set following each action item will generate a pop-up to help keep the staff on task.

CaseMap enhances collaboration between cooperating firms by making it possible to create and share large numbers of medical records and other related documents. CaseMap also makes it easy to leverage the data by creating chronologies and other presentation formats that cause the data to pop in the eyes of a jury—without having to pay for outside consultants to create a polished presentation.

And finally, Concordance allows everyone to carry a medical library around with them on their laptops. A library that is accessible from any location.

Most of all, LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions help Janet, Jenner & Suggs compete on a national level where they have won a number of multi-million dollar awards and settlements in individual and mass torts cases.

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About LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions

LexisNexis Total Practice Solutions deliver integrated tools and resources that help you achieve excellence in the business and practice of law.

Client Development—Industry-leading networking and marketing resources to grow your practice

Research Solutions—Exclusive sources vital to your client success

Practice Management—Services and tools proven to improve firm productivity and profitability

Litigation Services—Strategic insight and greater control; throughout the litigation process

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