

INDUSTRY: Legal

Technology plays a critical role in the busy, vibrant law office of this law firm. The litigation and business law firm has 45 employees in 14 practice areas, including 25 attorneys. There are six locations in the greater Chicago area, but staffers and attorneys don't have to be in the office in order to win cases and serve clients.

The firm has to put their servers in the cloud and extended their office environment beyond its brick and mortar setting. From courtrooms to client offices, attorneys have access to important documents, data and applications often used in the legal industry like Time Matters for organizing case loads and client information; BigHand, a dictation software; Tabs3, a billing software for law firms; and QuickBooks for accounting. Access for each is password protected by user.

"We're growing quickly and technology has helped us grow," said the law firm's IT Director. "If you have your laptop and an Internet connection, you have the same access as if you're in the office with 100 percent of the resources you need."

The Deep Value of 100% Uptime

It wasn't always that way. Before working with 3Points in the spring of 2015, each remote location had its own servers. When one server went down, everybody was down. Internet connections weren't always reliable; sometimes there would be an unexpected need to

reboot servers or the SQL server would crash. Among the firm's six offices, some sites would be replicated successfully while others weren't.

The defining line in the sand came when 3Points took the law firm's servers to the cloud. He says, "Outside of Windows updates, there is way less work on the servers and uptime is at 100 percent." The practice uses a net extender – a VPN (virtual private network) application that gives network access to users.

"Comcast is down today in our office," he comments, "and we can still go home and work because it's the Internet that is down, not our system. Everybody is still up."

It took about three months to go live in the cloud. Servers are housed at 3Points' datacenter located in Franklin Park, Ill. In addition to monitoring servers and devices, 3Points manages a technology maintenance plan for them that includes providing data backup and antivirus on servers and PCs, and conducting an annual technology audit.

Continued...

WWW.3POINTS.COM

CASE STUDY

3POINTS
GROWING SMALL BUSINESS WITH TECHNOLOGY

INDUSTRY: Legal

A Simple Plan for Data Backup and Cloud Computing

Data helps attorneys make more judicious early case assessments based on past experience, share business intelligence across the entire firm, and operate more profitably with greater visibility into the firm’s operations.

These factors underscore the importance of not only data, but data backup and redundancy (slightly different than actual backup, redundancy means storing data in more than one place).

“3Points took our data and created a simple backup plan that is 100 percent better,” he said. Specific applications run on designated servers in the cloud. BigHand, for instance requires so much space that it has its own server. In the event one application takes too many resources, the server doesn’t overload so resources are used more efficiently. He credits this to having a technology plan in place.

Law Firm Confident in Cloud Security

They are cloud confident. Why? According to him, the cloud “is more secure than hosting your own server.” Onsite physical servers are vulnerable to natural disasters, intruders, hackers and end-of-life issues. Security at the data center is high, and the servers’ firewall security is regularly updated. 3Points provides the law firm a set of best practices that they follow to a T. There’s even a plan to deflect the dreaded Crypto virus and a worst-case-scenario strategy to get data back within two hours should the virus successfully penetrate the firewall.

Efficiency Up By 50 Hours Per Person Annually

As attorneys and staffers within the practice operate more efficiently, time savings add up. Integrated technology has made everyone at the law firm more organized. An example: Outlook syncs with Time Matters so there is no need to duplicate a calendar event entry for a court date or client meeting.

Communication between applications now runs 10 times faster. In the cloud, servers sit side-by-side, eliminating unnecessary lag time. If, for example, there was a 30 second lag per document before – say 22 times a day – then that’s 10 minutes a day per worker, according to him. At 50 minutes a week, it adds up to 50 hours per year per person – a 2.5 percent increase in productivity. In the past, a simple reboot of a server meant 30 minutes lost, not including the time to fix the issue.

As the speed of uploading and downloading documents increases, billable hours actually go down for clients, saving them time and money.

“I’ve worked with many consultants over the last five years,” He says. “3Points’ strength is that they’re able to be more efficient and that makes us more efficient. I think it is because of their size and the fact that they document everything. They’ve seen the issue you have before and know how to handle it.”

He points to his firm’s biggest unique differential: a business where everybody works together for the firm’s success and equity partners treat colleagues like family. Their culture of caring aligns with giving its team the technology tools it needs to succeed as well as the opportunity for greater efficiency and client service.