

PCLaw®

Law Firm Practice Management Case Study

ROBERT SKIPWORTH

“From “billing was a chore” to “I can review the pre-bills within minutes and in an hour I’m done.”

For any attorney going out on their own, leaving behind a stable firm with a support staff and existing processes and software all in place can be an intimidating leap.

For El Paso attorney Robert Skipworth, any intimidation he may have initially felt soon turned to relief when the bookkeeper from his former firm offered one seemingly-small tidbit of advice: “I’ve got something you might be interested in,” she said.

That soon-to-be-revealed “something” turned out to be PCLaw® client, matter, billing and accounting software from PCLaw | Time Matters™

“I have a minimum number of dollars per day I need to bill and PCLaw helps me meet that.”

To fully understand just what a welcome change PCLaw was for Mr. Skipworth, you’d have to know more about the circumstances he left behind.

His former firm’s standard for recording time consisted of 8½ x 11 glue-top sheets which were collected from each timekeeper by an assistant, who then typed them in at the end of the month, or whenever she could get around to it.

“Billing was a chore,” said Mr. Skipworth, who remembers monthly billing at his old firm taking up to three days. “One partner thought he was so busy and invoicing took so long that he never got around to actually billing.

“With PCLaw, I can review the pre-bills within minutes and within an hour total, I’m done. It’s a real time-saver.”

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— Robert Skipworth, Attorney at Law

“All the numbers are on the client ledger, so if a client has a billing question, I can pull it up.”

As an insurance-defense and litigation attorney, Mr. Skipworth is especially happy with the transparency PCLaw billing helps him achieve, which promotes client trust.

“Recently, I had a situation with a client—someone I had gone through two or three cases with—complaining about charges,” he said. “Yet she couldn’t remember what the charges were for. I was able to re-create the bills with PCLaw and within minutes I said, ‘Here you go.’ The client was satisfied and that was the end of the matter because I was able to show her exactly what was done and which expenses I paid.”

That transparency also comes in handy for proving himself when he has to testify about his time on a matter. “I can print out a ledger and give every time and expense entry that’s been entered on a file, and that’s what I use when I have to testify on time for a trial,” Mr. Skipworth says. “Otherwise I would have to go back and re-create each bill sent to a client and print the re-created bill. “Depending on the case, that could take a very long time. A few clicks and the ledger has them all totaled and sequential.”

That few clicks comes across as especially impressive to Mr. Skipworth when he’s reminded of the alternative. “I just had an arbitration with a lawyer where he had to present his time. He was ill-prepared and could only present recent monthly summaries of his time,” he said. “But the claims went back some and he fumbled, claiming, ‘Yes, I’ve got

those time records, I just have to check with my secretary, look through the filings, I’ll get back to you, etc.”

“Gee wiz,” Mr. Skipworth thought to himself as the fumbling continued. “He’s in another century.”

“I always know what’s due and scheduled. PCLaw keeps me on it every hour of every day.”

With only himself and one secretary to keep his firm running smoothly, Mr. Skipworth is especially fond of the organizing help he gets from his PCLaw calendar. “My secretary will enter hearings and deadlines on the PCLaw calendar and that will come up on my opening screen each day.”

He also likes how PCLaw reports keep him updated about financial matters.

“When things are going slow toward the end of the month in terms of receivables, I’ll look at the Accounts Receivable report and see who owes me money so I can start beating on some doors and get paid.

“And the Trust Ledger is very helpful,” he added. “It lets me transfer from one matter to another and to the bank. I often pull up the Billing Fee Journal because I just need a quick summary of how much I’ve billed and how much someone has paid.”

Case Study Summary



ROBERT SKIPWORTH

Attorney at Law

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

Robert A. Skipworth is a solo attorney with over 30 years experience specializing in commercial, real estate and construction litigation, wrongful death and personal injury. The El Paso attorney is a trained mediator and even provides mediation services to people with disputes who are not his clients.

BUSINESS SITUATION:

After starting his own solo firm in 1997 with the help of just one secretary, Mr. Skipworth knew he couldn't afford to operate as inefficiently as the firm he left behind, where the "timekeeping system" consisted of 8½ x 11 glue-top sheets collected from each timekeeper by an assistant, who then typed them in at the end of the month. "Billing was a chore," said Mr. Skipworth, whose former firm took up to three days to get client bills out.

SOLUTION:

Mr. Skipworth was fortunate to have the bookkeeper from his former firm offer him one seemingly-small tidbit of advice

when he first went out on his own: "I've got something you might be interested in," she told him. That soon-to-be-revealed "something" turned out to be PCLaw® client, matter, billing and accounting software from PCLaw | Time Matters™. "With PCLaw, I can review the pre-bills within minutes and within an hour total, I'm done," Mr. Skipworth says. He also finds PCLaw helpful in helping him make sure his bills are transparently clear, both to his clients and to court officials for those times when he has to testify about his time on a matter. In addition, he appreciates how the PCLaw calendar keeps him organized and on top of legal matters, and how PCLaw reports keep him updated on his firm's financial matters.

PRODUCT SUMMARY:

PCLaw client, matter, billing and accounting software from PCLaw | Time Matters™ helps keep small to midsize firms' matters and finances organized and in control. With practice and financial management tools all built into one program, PCLaw tracks time and expenses, expedites billing, pays vendors, reconciles bank statements, centralizes client and matter details and so much more. In addition, PCLaw dashboards give you a quick-scan look at your firm's most essential information on one screen, so you can get on top of your day, your client needs and your finances all over your first cup of coffee. PCLaw also has Batch Email Billing, which allows your firm to get bills out faster so you can speed cash flow too.

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