



BlackBerry Customer Success Story

Law firm tracks more billable time using application for the BlackBerry solution



Founded in 1894, Duncan & Craig LLP is one of the oldest law firms in Alberta, Canada, providing a range of corporate and litigation services to local, national and international clients – from agribusiness to immigration and family law.

THE CHALLENGE

Lawyers at Duncan & Craig LLP were using BlackBerry® smartphones for daily communications with clients and co-workers, but they didn't have a solution in place to track the time spent on the phone or sending email to clients. Since tracking all billable time is important to any law firm's bottom line, the company wanted to simplify the current process to ensure they captured every billable event.

Lawyers were manually keeping track of increments of billable hours while out of the office. When they got back to their desks, they would fill in a timesheet and their assistants would manually key that information into the accounting system.

Because lawyers were busy advising clients, it was easy to forget about billing a few phone calls or emails – but those minutes were adding up to significant numbers across the firm. Not only were they losing billable hours, but lawyers and their assistants were also losing valuable time on manual billing processes.

As the firm's lawyers were becoming increasingly mobile, dealing with clients not only in Alberta, but also in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Ontario, they knew they needed a mobile solution.

THE SOLUTION

The firm's lawyers were already using BlackBerry smartphones, so Duncan & Craig LLP deployed the A4P®-Professional hosted application from AIRTIME-Manager® on 45 BlackBerry smartphones.

Utilizing an Equitrac solution to track expenses and Elite billing systems to monitor billable time, the A4P-Professional application enables professionals to better manage their airtime by tracking calls and emails through a time-entry interface on their devices. Once a call is completed or email is sent, the application prompts the lawyer to enter a file number to complete an event for billing. Lawyers can also use the timer on the BlackBerry smartphone during a meeting and enter that time directly into the time-entry interface.

Industry: Legal

Region: North America

Company Size: Medium Enterprise
- 140 Employees

Email Platform: Microsoft® Exchange

Solution: A4P®-Professional

“Our lawyers were already using BlackBerry smartphones for daily communications, but they weren’t managing their billable hours. With the BlackBerry solution they’re able to post their billable time almost immediately after a call or email, which not only recovers costs, but allows them to focus on what they do best instead of doing administrative duties.”

Stace Hamilton
IT Manager
Duncan & Craig LLP

Since lawyers were already familiar with the BlackBerry solution, the company felt the application would be a simple additional step in a familiar, easy-to-use interface that would easily gain user acceptance.

“The application on the BlackBerry smartphone provides our lawyers with flexibility,” says Stace Hamilton, IT Manager with Duncan & Craig LLP. “If they make a 30-minute call but only half of that is business-related, they can input only the time that should be billed. If the entire call is to be billed, the process is automated, allowing them to easily manage their airtime.”

The application is designed to remember previous clients and fills in the information on the next entry, which helps save time so lawyers don’t have to keep re-entering the same information. Or, the lawyer can pull up the client’s information in their Favorites List, which is generated from the billing system. Entries are sent to the AIRTIME-Manager server, which is the hosted part of the solution. It sends a daily report to Duncan & Craig LLP, which can then be approved by accounting and then updated in the billing system.

DUNCAN & CRAIG LLP’S BENEFITS

Their new mobile solution has allowed Duncan & Craig LLP to extend their current investment in the BlackBerry solution and introduce a new application on a device that was already widely used by the firm’s lawyers. Because the firm’s lawyers find the solution easy to use and are logging their time, the firm believes it’s getting significant cost recovery. By capturing billable time for each call and email – down to the minute – they believe that the solution is more than paying for itself.

“It’s helping to recover significant costs for us that we weren’t recovering before – previously those were just lost hours,” says Hamilton. “With the amount of work our lawyers are doing on a daily basis, it’s easy to forget about an email sent a couple of days ago. But the time spent on those lost emails can add up in a hurry, and that wasn’t always being accounted for in our previous environment.”

The solution has also led to an increase in productivity for both lawyers and their assistants. Instead of trying to remember the details of each phone call and email at the end of the day and filling out labor-intensive timesheets, lawyers now enter information into their BlackBerry smartphone immediately after a call or email. Their assistants no longer have to be involved in the process, since the data is transmitted almost automatically to the AIRTIME-Manager server for processing.

This new process frees up lawyers and their assistants to make more productive use of their time, and also provides a detailed, accurate account of all communications between the firm’s lawyers and their clients.

For the IT department, the solution has proven to be simple to manage and administer. AIRTIME-Manager hosts the solution and sends Hamilton regular reports about the lawyers’ transactions, which he can then add into his own reporting system. “I don’t have to think about it,” he says. “It just works.”

KEY BENEFITS

- Better ability to recover costs
 - More accurate time-tracking
 - Increased productivity
 - Builds on current investment in BlackBerry solution
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www.blackberry.com/go/success



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