

# Defense Litigation Firm, McAngus Goudelock and Courie Responds in a Big Way with BigHand

## CASE STUDY

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**“Solutions like BigHand have a real advantage in the changing legal industry because as firms struggle to meet the demands of a changing marketplace, all of a sudden, technology solutions like this become essential to maintain and improve profitability.”**

## **BigHand Becomes Essential at Defense Litigation Firm’s Business Approach to the New Legal Marketplace, Significantly Reducing Overhead Costs by \$250,000 Annually While Continuing to Provide the Highest Level of Client Service**

### **Setting the Standard for Success in the New Legal Marketplace**

At defense litigation firm, McAngus Goudelock and Courie, technology has played a key role in its business approach to providing the highest level of client service, while remaining profitable across its 6 offices in the fast changing legal marketplace. Streamlining processes and maximizing productivity at reduced costs is woven into the firm’s culture so McAngus Goudelock and Courie can share that value with its clients.

In addition, with the firm’s core client base in the corporate sector, when the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) launched its “Value Challenge”, McAngus Goudelock and Courie stepped up to the plate and took a proactive approach to the initiative, responding to the call to “use technology to the mutual benefit of both firms.” The ACC “Value Challenge” is based on the concept that firms can greatly improve the value of what they do, reduce their costs to corporate clients and still maintain strong profitability.

### **From Replacement Task to Strategic Business Decision**

As McAngus Goudelock and Courie continually assessed its processes and technologies, the firm identified inefficiencies and expensive equipment replacement costs with its antiquated dictation system. As a defense litigation firm, McAngus Goudelock and Courie produces a large amount of documents via dictation and transcription, requiring significant reliance on office-based support staff and quick turnaround times.

As a result, the objective went beyond replacing the antiquated system, but to find a solution that aligned with the firm’s core business objectives. The goal: Find an enterprise digital dictation solution that could maximize document production turnaround times across all 6 locations and help identify opportunities to utilize existing support staff in all locations.

Leah Beckham, Chief Operating Officer, discussed the firm’s strong success with the BigHand enterprise digital dictation system. “We wanted an enterprise system that provided our administrative team with the ability to centrally manage a dictation solution. Most importantly, we wanted the ability to measure the utilization of both our lawyers and staff with regard to dictation and transcription,” she explained.

### **User Experience and Mobility Prevail with BigHand**

McAngus Goudelock and Courie evaluated several solutions and the decision came down to two systems. Ms. Beckham commented, “We then ran a three week trial with each vendor. The pilot users were tremendously in favor of BigHand. They loved the BigHand for BlackBerry® mobile interface- it is used extensively for task delegation, time entry and traditional dictation. One of our managing partners is constantly traveling and absolutely loves the BigHand application on his BlackBerry. We have many requests for the software to be added to more devices.”

Ms. Beckham continued, “BigHand also gave us the capability to measure productivity from the beginning and to see how we could leverage the software to change the workflows of our legal assistants.”

### **Business Continuity Without the Extra Costs**

“The power of BigHand lies in its ability to re-distribute work instantly within and across offices. Regardless of location, number of offices or virtual set-up, BigHand can be utilized in any environment. We share and transfer work on a daily basis,” explained Ms Beckham.



“Over the summers when staff is on vacation, we are able to leverage our existing resources between all of our 6 offices with BigHand, giving us the ability to utilize the staff we already have in place and work continues to get done. More recently, we have had staff members that are on a long medical leave of absence and with BigHand, we are now able to very easily re-route work instead of adding additional staff.”

### Change of Billing Practices Leads to Change of Working Practices

Ms. Beckham elaborated on the ACC’s “Value Challenge” and discussed how BigHand has played a key role in changing the firm’s processes to meet billing requests. “In keeping with the ACC’s ‘Value Challenge’, we constantly keep an open dialogue with our clients. This reduces the ‘Us vs. Them’ mentality and really works to the benefit of both firms. As we work more closely with our clients, we are under more and more pressure to eliminate certain charges.”

“For example, there is increased pressure this year to eliminate charges for scheduling activities, which used to be done by our paralegals and charged to the client. BigHand is an integral part of easily transferring that activity over to secretarial support staff. Attorneys can simply dictate when a hearing or deposition needs to be scheduled to their assistant and the paralegals can focus on billable tasks.”

Ms. Beckham concluded, “With the flexibility of BigHand, we are also now exploring alternative working groups such as a central word processing team. This would free up many of the secretarial support staff to help out with scheduling and other non-billable tasks.”

### Big Savings Makes BigHand Essential to the Firm

“Since the BigHand roll-out, we have added 35 new timekeepers and have only added 2 additional support staff! This is a dramatic improvement in ratios of timekeepers to support staff, significantly reducing overhead costs by \$250,000 annually for the firm. These results have translated BigHand into a technology solution that is essential in meeting the business objectives of our firm.”

She went on to explain, “The other significant impact of BigHand is our ability to measure productivity of support staff and lawyers, reduce overhead and still provide superior client service. BigHand has allowed us to calculate overhead, leverage existing support staff and that translates into measureable results and cost savings.”

### Benchmark for Success: Leading the Way

As the rest of the legal marketplace heads in the direction described above, McAngus Goudelock and Courie is leveraging its expertise by forming a new consulting practice to advise other firms that are facing this new challenge.

Ms. Beckham explains, “Our consulting practice is in its early stages of development and has tremendous opportunity in the current legal marketplace based on the 15 years of experience we have with engineering business practices that make a significant impact on profit margins. This includes watching our costs and being more efficient. Although our experience is in the Insurance Defense area, we have the distinct advantage of being successful in a climate that many firms are facing for the first time. Any law firm faced with the challenges of delivering services better, faster and at the lower cost demanded by clients today can benefit from our expertise.”

“And BigHand is a key solution that can help firms achieve those business objectives. Every firm should be looking at this type of technology; one that allows a firm to leverage its existing support staff while increasing its time keepers. It’s such a crucial technology and the proof is in the ROI and productivity measurements.”

Managing partner, Jay Courie, finished the review of BigHand by saying, “BigHand is an instrumental part of how our firm is using technology to achieve greater efficiencies and profitability. Solutions like BigHand have a real advantage in the changing legal industry because as firms struggle to meet the demands of a changing marketplace, all of a sudden, technology solutions like this become essential to maintain and improve profitability.”

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