

Case study: Whitfield & Eddy PLC

Whitfield & Eddy achieves flexibility and cross-office working with BigHand Dictate



Whitfield & Eddy streamlines workflow across multiple offices and reduces work turnaround times with BigHand Dictate

When Whitfield & Eddy PLC, an Iowa-based firm with 55 attorneys across 4 offices, found it increasingly difficult to manage its existing mix of analog tapes and Olympus stand-alone dictation software, the firm began to look into an alternative solution. Not only would the new system need to save them time on the back end managing the software, but it would also need to maximize the efficiency of support staff in all their offices, increase attorney mobile productivity and help everyone get more done in less time.

IT Director at Whitfield & Eddy PLC, Shawn Brown, explained how the firm's journey from fragmented technologies to an enterprise-wide solution helped to make their lawyers more mobile and reduced back end system management from hours to minutes.

The big challenge

"The main problem with the Olympus standalone software arose when an attorney changed assistants or had a floating assistant cover absence. The back end management of the standalone software was very complex and needed to be done by IT. We had to manually go into the system and reassign access to different folders up to three times a day, which led to the time-pressured HR Manager having to wait for a busy IT person to complete this each time."

"I saw BigHand at a trade show and watched a demonstration of the software. I then spoke with my account manager at CDW and decided to take a closer look."

The business case

"Streamlining processes was our biggest driver. With firmwide responsibility for all of our assistants, we wanted the HR team to manage our dictation assignments and be able to give the lawyers immediate access to the support resource they needed, without having to involve IT."

"We are now also able to utilize dumb terminals instead of desktop PCs, since BigHand works seamlessly in thin client environments. This is also saving hardware costs as well as IT support time."



Leveraging existing resources

Shawn adds, "Now, when an assistant is overloaded, they will proactively ask for help from floating support staff. With BigHand's enterprise workflow solution, assistants can be given the ability to access additional support folders as needed without involving IT or HR. Assistants who have capacity are now able to help out with dictations from other offices, which was not previously possible with tape-based systems or with the Olympus stand-alone software.

This has led to even greater teamworking across our 4 offices."



Tracking and prioritization

"Attorneys have mentioned that the new system is a lot easier than keeping track of a tapes. What's nice is that the BigHand software didn't require a huge change in process, and users still have the option of sticking with the same digital recording device they're used to. They also like the ability to monitor when a dictation has been completed without having to check with their assistants. Finally, the assistants no longer waste time trying to find higher priority recordings on a tape of many - dictations now get delivered one at a time."

"The benefits of BigHand to IT and HR have led to huge increases in efficiency. A process that used to take up to 15 administrative staff hours each month has been reduced to a matter of minutes."

"BigHand has led to even greater team working across our 4 offices. Assistants who have capacity are now able to help out with dictations from other offices, which was not previously possible with our tape-based systems or the Olympus stand alone software."

The future: New practices, smartphones and voice-to-text

"The ease with which support staff can help each other out has meant we have begun to add more assistants to the system that normally don't do any transcribing. If we have an assistant that is overloaded with work, but someone else has capacity, we can easily assign them additional help from the floater pool in a matter of seconds."

"We currently have a couple of users set up with the BigHand mobile app, so that lawyers can submit work on the move, which works extremely well. We are looking to extend that functionality to more lawyers in the near future."

"At some point, we would also like to explore the option of add BigHand's voice-to-text software to our package. Having the flexibility to include a server-based, complementary tool to our existing BigHand system, rather than having to replace a technology we're very happy with, is a sensible approach for a solution that we believe has enormous potential."

About BigHand

Established in 1996, BigHand has developed a range of speech, workflow, document creation and process improvement solutions that help our customers achieve more in less time. BigHand is based in Chicago, Eindhoven, London, Sydney, Temecula and Toronto and currently supports over 545,000 software licenses in over 3,000 global organizations.

BigHand's Voice, Delegation and Improvement product suites are HIPAA compliant to protect the privacy and security of protected health information (PHI) as defined in the HITECH Act. BigHand is proud to be ISO27001 certified.

About Whitfield & Eddy PLC

The law firm of Whitfield and Eddy, PLC serves its nationwide client from four locations in Iowa. The firm, which is made up of over 40 specialist attorneys, is committed to meeting the diverse, challenging and changing needs of clients through a proactive problem solving approach. Whitfield & Eddy offers legal services including business, banking, litigation, employment and labor, real estate, transportation, construction, family law, and wills, trusts and estate planning.

