

PROLAW CASE STUDY
ALLEN & GOOCH

PROLAW XII AND BIPRO INTEGRATION IMPROVES
FIRM PERFORMANCE

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IMPLEMENTING THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Allen & Gooch is a nonpartisan, highly regarded advocate for business in Louisiana. Through a network of relationships with policy makers and economic stakeholders, its team works hard to level the playing field for businesses working to grow and thrive in Louisiana. The firm's attorneys immerse themselves in their clients' business objectives so they can pursue the precise legal strategies that best further their goals.

Technology is a key tool in creating the processes that differentiate Allen & Gooch from its competitors. According to the firm's Managing Partner Clay Allen, "We have always strived to be technologically forward to achieve best practices and deliver optimal client service. We provide the tools our lawyers need to achieve a greater standard of control for the numerous matters they handle every day."

In 2006, the firm became a client of ProLaw®, the leading One Office™ financial and practice management solution from Thomson Reuters Elite. Out of all of the firm's technology, "ProLaw is the most important tool we have," states Allen. "We take full advantage of its front and back-office integration, using virtually every feature of the solution to improve the way we do business."

The firm upgraded to ProLaw XII in 2012 to gain more efficiencies, improve client communication, and achieve a more sophisticated integration with Microsoft™ applications. Since implementing its more advanced functionality, Allen and his team have leveraged ProLaw XII to meet ongoing client demands for more compelling services at lower costs. Allen explains, "We've really relied on ProLaw XII to improve our staffing ratio and eliminate unnecessary costs that were not raising our quality of client service. This has also enabled our firm to increase the number of services we offer."

ProLaw is an integrated software solution designed to automate the practice and manage the business of law. Built entirely on Microsoft .NET®, ProLaw XII combines case and matter management as well as time entry, billing, and accounting capabilities within a single integrated solution.

In order to maintain a competitive advantage, the firm needed to integrate a financial management reporting solution with ProLaw XII to monitor key performance indicators (KPIs) that would help the firm's leaders make more informed decisions. Because most of the firm's attorneys do not have backgrounds in accounting or finance, it had been an ongoing challenge for them to identify and comprehend the trends that impact the firm's economic performance. "We thought that if we could equip our attorneys with an accurate and intuitive reporting tool, they would be able to clearly see how their behaviors can ultimately make a difference," explains Allen.

After evaluating a range of customized solutions, Allen and his team quickly realized it would take a lot of time and effort to develop the type of solution they needed to present the right information to the firm's lawyers. "When we came across BIPRO™, we instantly recognized that it would be the ultimate business intelligence solution to address all of the challenges we were facing," Allen says. "It was the best possible tool to help us design the visual dashboard we sought."

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Clay Allen
Managing Partner

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ALLEN & GOOCH

Allen & Gooch provides the sophisticated legal representation businesses need to operate successfully in Louisiana's fast-paced, globally competitive environment. The firm has two offices in New Orleans and Lafayette.

OBJECTIVE

The firm needed a reporting solution to monitor economic trends with key performance indicators that would integrate with ProLaw.

WHY BIPRO?

BIPRO™ is a business intelligence and financial reporting solution designed to mentor attorneys and other non-financial managers to better align their time with financial-driven results.

BENEFITS

- Integrated with key applications, including ProLaw XII
- Provided intuitive understanding of KPIs to improve individual and overall performance
- Helped establish budgets and guidelines for economic productivity
- Improved billing and collection speeds

BIPro, or Business Intelligence Professional, is a financial management reporting software available through Thomson Reuters Elite. BIPro was created by Advanced Legal Systems to integrate with ProLaw to provide uniquely simplified and enhanced reporting. Using patented Blink Chart™ visualization technology, firms can access critical financial data in a matter of seconds without the need to create multiple lengthy financial reports. BIPro helps clients gather, store, and analyze data with comprehensive profitability analytics to visually track productivity and determine effectiveness.

BIPro was integrated directly with the programs Allen & Gooch use every day, and rolling out the Web-based solution went very smoothly, notes Allen. "Because it was designed for the non-financial professional, BIPro is incredibly intuitive and required very little training. We are very pleased with how reliable the solution has been since the implementation," he adds.

"The integration of BIPro has been an incredibly useful tool in communicating to the partners and the associates the KPIs that show how the firm is doing economically and how it can excel."

Clay Allen

STRATEGICALLY MONITORING FINANCIAL DATA

Utilizing its own SQL® database, BIPro aggregates all of the firm's ProLaw accounting information so overall performance can be evaluated on a daily basis. Each lawyer can clearly see the actions that need to be taken to dramatically improve and streamline the economic side of our practice, says Allen.

Accounts receivable (AR) and work-in-progress (WIP) data for every matter are organized in the Dashboard. Drilldowns enable users to filter data by client, professional, and age to make it easy to view and resolve the firm's most pressing financial matters.

"What is wonderful about BIPro is not only that it shows a wealth of information, it also highlights the immediate actions we need to take to improve our financial management," Allen explains. "We use BIPro to prioritize our daily schedules according to what would have the greatest impact on the firm. It gives us the opportunity to proactively solve outstanding items before they have a chance to materialize."

"Without BIPro, we'd have to go through dozens of reports and search for the actionable information required to either make a positive change or to prevent a negative occurrence in the business of our practice. It would not be feasible for a large firm such as ours," adds Allen.

BIPro keeps all of the firm's partners and associates up-to-date with the performance for both of the firm's locations. At semi-annual evaluation meetings, BIPro is used to help set budgets and establish guidelines for productivity. "The integration of BIPro has been an incredibly useful tool in communicating to partners and associates the KPIs that show how the firm is doing economically and how it can excel," Allen says.

For example, Allen shares that for its hourly billing clients, the firm has been able to send out invoices 40 percent faster. Additionally, collection speed has improved by 30 percent. "These efficiencies have been one of the key benefits of BIPro," Allen says.

BIPro has also been a tremendous tool for recruitment and comparative evaluation, as it helps the firm's lawyers clearly understand how their behaviors lead to their success. When new lawyers join the firm, they may have concerns about how their economic contributions will be evaluated in line with the benchmarks of the firm. However, once they see how BIPro provides instant access to live accounting data, "they take comfort in having an objective measurement of their performance." Allen adds, "Being able to track their progress relative to the KPIs of their peer groups is a great benefit for new hires. BIPro prevents any doubt or anxiety about being treated unfairly."

Allen and his team also use BIPro to establish compensation expectations based on performance evaluation. He elaborates, "It has been an enormous benefit to be able to make compensation agreements according to the KPIs modeled in BIPro. This way, there are no misunderstandings as new hires move into the firm."

A BRIGHT FUTURE WITH BIPRO

Ultimately, BIPro has "removed the mysticism of the business of law and given transparency to our stakeholders, relative to their own goals," says Allen. "It has both streamlined our processes and improved our ability to identify overall contributions to the firm."

To anyone who has asked about BIPro, "I say that it is a great tool for any firm to use," says Allen. "Its integration with the ProLaw database makes the solution incredibly valuable, and we consider it a key tool to manage the business side of a practice, particularly for non-financial professionals."

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“We look forward to seeing how BIPro will continue to benefit our firm well into the future. BIPro is the most important tool our attorneys have in achieving their economic goals, and if you were to take it away, there would be a riot!”

Clay Allen
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He and his team have found very little need for ongoing customizations; however, they have compiled a list of features that they would like to see in future upgrades of the solution. Allen says that the BIPro team has been very receptive and is interested in delivering on these suggestions.

Allen concludes, “We look forward to seeing how BIPro will continue to benefit our firm well into the future. BIPro is the most important tool our attorneys have in achieving their economic goals, and if you were to take it away, there would be a riot!” he quips.

For more information about ProLaw and BIPro, please call **(800) 977-6529** or visit www.prolaw.com.

