

PROLAW CASE STUDY

KALBAUGH PFUND &
MESSERSMITH, P.C.

PROLAW LAYS THE GROUNDWORK FOR
ONGOING SUCCESS

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ENLIGHTENING NEW TECHNOLOGY

Proudly grown over the last 27 years with distinct purpose and innovation, Kalbaugh Pfund & Messersmith, P.C. (KPM LAW) is expressly committed to the field of corporate and insurance defense. The firm originated as a five-person practice and has organically expanded to be comprised of 40 lawyers and 45 staff members located across 4 offices in Virginia.

Instrumental to the firm's growth has been its use of ProLaw®, a fully integrated software system from Thomson Reuters Elite designed to automate the practice and manage the business of law. Built entirely on Microsoft® .NET®, ProLaw combines case and matter management as well as time entry, billing, and accounting capabilities. The firm deployed ProLaw in 1998 to consolidate back- and front-office functionality, and the system has since provided a pathway to support the firm's ongoing expansion across multiple locations. According to the firm's President and Managing Partner John Messersmith, "One of the biggest advantages ProLaw has provided over the years is that it has never been a constraint on our growth—it actually supports it."

To this day, ProLaw continues to help overcome many of the complexities associated with maintaining accuracy and efficiency from one office to the next. Lawyers can seamlessly exchange the most up-to-date information among each other, regardless of location. Additionally, sophisticated mobile technology enables secure access to critical case files via tablets, mobile phones, and remote desktops. This virtual work environment means that lawyers can bring matters to clients wherever they may be, and they can even work from home if they prefer.

ProLaw has allowed the firm to expand its services without having to equally grow its back-office administration. Since going live on the solution, its number of lawyers has nearly tripled, but its billing staff has only grown from 2 to 4. There simply hasn't been much of a need to increase such personnel because ProLaw relieves a substantial amount of the burden.

"Being able to maintain such a small headcount speaks volumes to the return on investment we've received from ProLaw."

John Messersmith
Managing Partner

"Being able to maintain such a small admin headcount speaks volumes to the return on investment we've received from ProLaw," comments Messersmith. "The system is incredibly flexible and has always been able to scale with us, even as we have expanded at a significant rate. I have every ounce of confidence it will continue to meet all of our evolving needs for years to come."

IMPROVED EFFICIENCY AND CLIENT SATISFACTION

One of KPM LAW's most distinguishing qualities is that it acts as what Messersmith describes as "a big small firm." This means that despite its size, the firm has all the resources needed to handle litigation of any size or complexity, and yet it is still able to maintain its commitment to providing precise and personalized service to each of its clients.

"Something that we hear from clients repeatedly is that they don't want to feel like they are working with a firm; they want one-to-one connections with our lawyers," Messersmith explains. "By the same token, they want to feel comfortable that they have the same resources of a large-sized firm to combat their litigation. With ProLaw, we are very easily able to adapt to that sort of juxtaposition."

Messersmith says that ProLaw has been a "tremendous" tool in providing tailored solutions with the flexibility needed to meet clients' changing needs. Rather than simply running through a checklist for each client, the firm's lawyers are able to focus a great deal of attention on clients' end goals and narrow in on how best to achieve them.

KALBAUGH PFUND & MESSERSMITH, P.C.

KPM LAW is a litigation firm that represents individuals, corporations, and insurance carriers throughout the mid-Atlantic, as well as Fortune 500 companies across the nation.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

The firm needed a business management solution to scale through expansion and support evolving needs.

WHY PROLAW?

Built from the ground-up on a single database, ProLaw combines case and matter management as well as time entry, billing, and accounting capabilities within a single integrated solution.

BENEFITS

- Supported ongoing growth while maintaining back office headcount
- Supports seamless collaboration between lawyers and offices
- Generates instantaneous financial and management reporting
- Easy-to-use, flexible interface

Every piece of information available to the firm is found within ProLaw and can be easily located by any lawyer. The system tracks all case updates from the moment a case is assigned, making it easy for lawyers to collaborate. Even if multiple people are working on a case, the lawyer in contact with the client has instantaneous access to all pertinent information and can therefore answer any questions and advise the client on how best to achieve desired outcomes.

“ProLaw provides a sense of cohesion that gives our clients the personalized services they want, so they don’t feel like they’re just one of many clients,” Messersmith explains. “To them, it’s almost as if they are working with a single lawyer that has all of the resources of a larger firm. That is a big differentiator for us.”

From Messersmith’s point of view as a managing partner, ProLaw has provided a significant benefit in enabling him to dictate tasks to multiple lawyers on a single case and then track their updates in ProLaw. The system also equips him with sophisticated financial reporting tools that can be used to easily measure lawyer efficiency and overall firm performance. Information can be drilled down in a variety of ways, such as hours generated by a timekeeper in a single day, week, or month, or by the length of time it takes to get paid on any given case or type of matter.

“Now more than ever, clients are interested in measuring performance in metrics, and ProLaw makes it easy to retrieve such data in any sort of fashion we want on the fly,” states Messersmith. “There is such a wealth of information that I can provide to our clients through a number of incredible features—it is an amazing tool.”

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John Messersmith

OPTIMIZING OPERATIONS WITH MICROSOFT INTEGRATION

Over the years, Messersmith and his team have appreciated how ProLaw has continued to advance its sophisticated technology, always keeping the firm a step ahead of the curve. The firm has been able to utilize the constantly evolving tools without having to conduct subsequent trainings or modify operating procedures.

“What is great about our continued use of ProLaw is that we’ve never had to make any adjustments to our practice simply to accommodate a software package,” says Messersmith. “This has enabled us to place a greater focus on growing our firm and expanding our capabilities.”

For example, ProLaw has given the firm “true paperless capability” by making every piece of information on a file available electronically, which any lawyer can easily locate. Lawyers can now respond to questions in not just hours or minutes, but within seconds, substantially improving the firm’s quality of client service.

Another example is keeping up with the advent of electronic billing. Throughout the last five years, the firm has gone from just a couple of clients doing electronic billing to now virtually all of clients, despite each of them wanting to use a different system.

“ProLaw has been very flexible in allowing us to interact between our clients’ proprietary billing systems and our own invoicing system, while maintaining complete consistency,” states Messersmith. “So, although we may have 50 different platforms on which we operate externally, internally it’s always the same process for us.”

In fact, Messersmith says that overall ease of use has been one of the system’s greatest features. Even for lawyers that are tech-adverse, Messersmith says that ProLaw has been very intuitive and has made it easy for them to manage all files and data without really having to think about the mechanics behind it. Previously siloed processes, such as time entry and matter management, have been integrated to eliminate duplicate efforts, causing efficiency to soar.

“Without ProLaw, we would be at a dramatic disadvantage from both front- and back-office standpoints,” states Messersmith. “The time we are saving can now be spent better serving our clients, which in turn generates more income for our firm. Not having ProLaw would simply be detrimental to our success.”

Watch the video interview to learn more about how ProLaw has enable growth for KPM LAW. For more information about ProLaw, please call **(800) 977-6529** or visit **ProLaw.com**.

