



Charles Winfield

Perry, Winfield & Wolfe,

Olympus Digital Dictation Recorders and Transcribers increase Law Firm's Billable Hours and Increase Time Efficiencies

Digital Dictation System transforms law firm.

It's rare that any organization encounters technology that it can truly call "transforming." But this is precisely the term attorneys at Perry, Winfield and Wolfe use when describing the effect that Digital Dictation and Transcription has had on the firm.

The Challenge

Operating margins at small law firms not massive. This means partners and associates must be highly productive and maximize billable hours.

But traditional tape-based methods of dictation were impeding these efforts at the law firm of Perry, Winfield and Wolfe.

The partners spend significant time away from the office – in court, at meetings and in their cars. This meant lawyers had to ship tapes back and alert the firm's lone secretary about the priority of pending work. They then had to wait for the dictation to be transcribed.

According to partner Charles E. Winfield, the "hassle factor" of this approach grew unbearable. In fact, he found that he was typing documents himself – a highly unproductive practice – rather than dealing with the challenges of carrying blank tapes with him, finding overnight delivery services to send dictation back to the office and waiting for transcribed documents to be returned to him. "We knew there had to be a better way," he says.

The Solution

Winfield began to research dictation systems on the Internet and first purchased an inexpensive

unit. However, he soon recognized that not all digital dictation recorders are created equal. The inexpensive unit was "not workable," did not have a convenient download feature, and required almost as many steps to get from dictation to transcription as the old analog systems did.

Winfield continued the search, recognizing that His firm needed a new generation of professional digital dictation technology that was not only simple to use, but that offered the capabilities he and his partners desired.

Working through Recorder.com, Perry, Winfield and Wolfe ultimately selected the Olympus DS-5000, which includes a range of features that matched the firm's requirements.

Recorder was great to deal with and they listened to our needs. They were receptive to our ideas and we felt confident that when they recommended the Olympus system, it was the right choice for us," reports Winfield.

"When we tested the Olympus recorder, it was clear that this was the new generation of dictation technology," Winfield says. Primary among the features they sought was the recorder's familiar thumb-operated slide switch, which mimicked exactly the way their analog recorders functioned.





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"The slide switch is very convenient and it was what we were all used to, so it made the transition from the analog recorder to the Olympus DS-5000 Pro Recorder simple," Winfield says. Likewise, the attorneys appreciated the large display screen on the recorder and indexing feature. Plus, smart buttons made menu selection very intuitive.

Equally important, however, is the Olympus companion USB docking station.

Lawyers simply place the recorder into the docking station when dictation is complete and files are automatically uploaded to the firm's file server for the secretary to begin transcription.

The secretary no longer needs to sort through stacks of emails from the lawyers, notifying her that tapes have been shipped and outlining work instructions for each file.

Perry, Winfield and Wolfe found implementation of the Olympus Digital Dictation System equally simple. Winfield was the first to put the Olympus Handheld to the test and says that he recognized the advantages it offered after only one day of use. Set-up is intuitive, and plug-and-play functionality allowed the rest of the firm's lawyers to begin using the system almost immediately after purchase. "We didn't even need to read the instructions – it's that straightforward," Winfield says. "But after you have taken ten minutes to review the manual, you will be amazed at all the functionality the Olympus DS-5000 offers.

The Benefits

Adopting the Olympus Dictation System has "changed our approach to the types of documents we dictate," says Winfield.

The firm's attorneys found that using analog recorders was a challenge and they had almost completely stopped dictating altogether. They were forced to use outdated rewind and fast-forward features to review dictation, and could insert information only at the end of the tape – relying on the secretary to position the new material in the proper place during transcription. "In the end, we were dictating only short documents. We would type longer documents ourselves, simply because it was less of a hassle."

But that proved hard on the bottom line. The lawyers' productivity dropped. "We couldn't bill clients our full rate for spending three hours typing up a brief that could have been transcribed by a secretary," Winfield explains.

The Olympus DS-5000 reversed that situation. Digital technology allows users to quickly scan through a file and insert text, delete text, or add comments or instructions in the middle of existing files without running the risk of recording over previous dictation. During dictation, users rely on Olympus' new smart button menus, which allow them to easily return to specific sections of the document, hit the "insert" button and add new text.

Winfield reports that the Olympus Digital Dictation System has made him "10 times more willing to dictate" his documents. "Before we adopted the Olympus digital system, I dictated 20-30 documents a year. Now I dictate twice that many in a week."

Transcription turnaround has also greatly improved and his secretary loves the new transcription system. Files that have been uploaded automatically appear on the secretary's screen. Each icon identifies which of the lawyers dictated the file. Priority documents display a red lag to indicate that the dictation requires immediate attention. "This has been a tremendous time saver and prevents a lot of headaches," Winfield says. "The secretary begins work on priority documents indicated with a red lag, and put the ones in black at the end of the queue."

Besides allowing their secretary to better manage her workflow, the Olympus AS-5000 Transcription Kit has reduced job-related stress. "She no longer gets caught between the four attorneys," Winfield explains. "With our old analog system, she would have to chase individual attorneys down after she received their tapes to determine where to begin. She often got caught in the crossfire of discussions about whose work took precedence."

In short, the Olympus Digital System have had a significant and positive impact on Perry, Winfield and Wolfe – both in terms of workflow and profitability. "Olympus costs more than cassette recorders, but it has paid for itself many times over," Winfield says. "Billable hours have increased 20%, and we are writing of a lot less time because our attorneys are once again dictating and are no longer typing their own documents.

"The Olympus digital dictation system lives up to all of its promises and has made a tremendous difference in how our practice operates. It is the best money we have spent in a long time."



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