

Prestigious law firm with an international presence taps into Lexmark hardware, software and services to significantly reduce its paperwork burden, save precious staff time, generate revenue and dramatically improve customer service to its clients.

Florida law firm judges Lexmark document solution as tops in efficiency and quality

The Organization

Holland & Knight, based in Lakeland, Fla. and with 27 offices throughout the United States and six more internationally, relies on its infrastructure and collaborative approach in five practice areas: litigation, government, business, real estate, and private wealth services. Through its integrated practice groups and industry-based teams, the 2,500-person firm provides comprehensive legal representation around the world.

Service and responsiveness are the cornerstones of Holland & Knight's client-focused culture. Key to achieving those high standards is technology that provides seamless connectivity between Holland & Knight's attorneys and clients. An advanced communications network securely links clients and lawyers to provide high levels of customer service and response.

The Challenge

In the 1980s and 1990s, Holland & Knight expanded, gaining more employees, locations and clients. As Holland & Knight grew, so did its paper problem. As it opened additional offices and its clientele list and caseloads grew, Holland & Knight found itself with an increasing mountain of paper. Every week, thousands of documents relating to client cases arrived in the mail, via fax and by courier. Some were a single page in length; others might run hundreds of pages.

But to Ralph Barber, Chief Information Officer of the firm, all of these documents represented more than just paper. In fact, to Barber, every piece of paper he sees represents money and time wasted. Those two impacts take away from client service.

The firm had previously done what many law firms are now tackling - putting in place robust scanning devices to get documents into document management systems like Interwoven. But that important step didn't solve the firm's paper challenge. Frankly, it illuminated how

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Holland+Knight

—Ralph Barber
Chief Information Officer
Holland & Knight
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significant the challenge truly was. Although documents could be easily scanned into the system for sharing and storage, they were in a format that was not fully searchable and editable. Because of this fact, staff had to take significant amounts of time to convert these scanned document images into a usable format. These additional steps were laborious, complex and took precious time away from client service.



Desktop computers were actually set aside for use as dedicated optical character recognition stations in each office. They could not handle the load and tied up precious office space and assets. Processing a 50 page document often took more than one hour, once the job reached the head of the line. Increasingly, staffers found it faster to remain at their own desks and retype documents. This was hardly a good use of time or the kind of expense any client wants to see on an itemized statement.

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The firm’s hallmark efficiency and client service were in jeopardy because it was not able to effectively scan, convert to editable text and electronically store or retrieve the thousands of matter-related documents received each day. Although documents were electronically stored, dozens of manual tasks still remained, taking up valuable staff time and resources.

To maintain its high levels of service, the firm needed to scan these documents and convert them to electronic form in multiple editable text formats, and index them accurately. Perhaps most important, instantaneous on-demand retrieval had to be assured. Scanned documents had to also be available to lawyers in any of the firm’s offices. A better way was needed. To find it, Holland & Knight turned to Lexmark International, Inc.

The Solution

To solve these challenges, Holland & Knight has implemented an innovative, unique and powerful solution involving hardware, software and services from Lexmark.

Documents can now be immediately scanned into the firm’s electronic document management system (EDMS) in a fully editable and searchable format that eliminates the need for a separate OCR process. For the firm, the solution has saved countless hours of staff time, considerable costs in equipment and maintenance and dramatically improved client service.

The firm has installed more than 50 Lexmark MFPs with Lexmark Document Distributor software. Equipped with a color touchscreen control panel customized for Holland & Knight’s unique requirements, the MFPs make it easy for anyone to process documents, enter identifying information, and step back as scanning and text conversion are done quickly and accurately. The electronic versions of the documents are automatically routed to the firm’s EDMS, the networked central repository that allows instant retrieval by a lawyer down the hall or around the world.

“It now takes our associates five minutes to do what used to take over an hour to do,” said Barber. “Our IT philosophy has shifted from one of technology provider to one of revenue generation. Now, we’re focused on how technology can help us make and save money and the Lexmark solution is absolutely doing that for us.”

With the Lexmark solution linked directly to Holland & Knight’s EDMS, the firm now validates each document against the live client matter database as it is scanned. This real-time validation eliminates misfiling documents with the wrong client and virtually eliminates system exceptions, which took a lot of time to reconcile.

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The Holland & Knight solution was created uniquely for the firm based on its workflow processes by customizing the Lexmark Document Distributor software to perform a series of steps that electronically recreate its manual process.

“No other vendor could provide this capability,” said Barber. “The flexibility of the Lexmark Document Solutions Suite software combined with barcode technology has opened the doors for H&K to tailor specific solutions to specific document issues. By leveraging the EDMS system for storage and searching, we can pull up any document and e-mail it to the client while we are still on the phone with them. Clients are amazed at the immediate turnaround, and we completely eliminate the need for a follow-up phone call.”

The Lexmark solution now handles more than 500 scan jobs a day, a number expected to continue to quickly rise.

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With Lexmark multifunction devices installed, Holland & Knight is gradually retiring existing printers and fax machines. This device consolidation saves space and does away with the need to stock toner cartridges for different makes and models. The firm has also chosen to use genuine Lexmark toner supplies, a move that assures the highest quality output and the lowest number of service calls and interventions.

“We could purchase refurbished toner cartridges and maybe save a few dollars, but we are a \$500 million organization that demands high print quality for its clients,” said Barber. “We have a lean IT staff and don't have time to deal with headaches. Using Lexmark's high-yield toner cartridges helps with that by reducing printer downtime. The operational savings are significant.”

The Results

For Holland & Knight, Lexmark is more than a mere hardware vendor. It is a partner with legal industry consultants who understand the law firm's needs and responded with a solution tailored to its unique requirements.

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“Frankly, Lexmark is the only printing solution provider we've talked to that gets it,” said Barber.

Case closed.