Improve Legal Care with Video Conferencing Solutions

an IVCi White Paper
THE BENEFITS VISUAL COLLABORATION can provide to law firms are undeniable. These solutions enable firms to meet today’s legal challenges, such as geographically dispersed clients and timely access to subject matter experts, while helping minimize expenses. Partners and associates can manage their ever-growing case load, and maximize billable hours by connecting with clients or subject matter experts faster and easier than ever before. Plus, utilizing video conferencing for ad-hoc and/or scheduled meetings, means reducing time spent out of the office and better communication and collaboration among remote offices.

By combining visual collaboration technology with a robust cloud platform, law firms can take advantage of a workflow solution designed to deliver greater legal care to more clients in less time. The result is improved revenue streams, increased client satisfaction and higher client retention. Below are just a few examples of how law firms can integrate visual collaboration solutions into their daily operations.

LAW FIRMS HAVE MANY GEOGRAPHICALLY dispersed clients; either throughout the state, across the county or around the globe. As a result, many client meetings require a lengthy car ride or plane flight. Even clients that are only located 15 miles away can result in an hour car ride round trip. Couple that with an hour long client meeting and the end result is two hours out of the office.

Video conferencing solutions can provide face-to-face client interaction, while eliminating the travel time associated with these meetings. Cloud bridging services allow clients to connect to a traditional video conferencing system via Skype, their smartphone or tablet, or even their web browser. So instead of spending the hour driving to and from a client meeting, lawyers can utilize that time to sync up with another client. Not only does this increase productivity, it helps reduce the travel expenses that would typically be passed on to clients.

While not all meetings can be replaced by video there are many routine calls or tasks that can be switched from an audio to a video conference. Video interaction provides eye contact and other non-verbal cues which help build and strengthen client relationships. Plus, the increased visibility improves client satisfaction, and eventually retention.

EXPERT WITNESSES PLAY A SIGNIFICANT role by providing credibility and backup for key evidence and claims. Unfortunately, these specialists can be difficult and costly to utilize; especially if they are located overseas. Flight delays or cancellations, last minute conflicts, and other issues can prevent experts from arriving on time, if at all. This can present numerous issues when preparing for a case, or even worse, if the expert is supposed to testify at trial.

Video conferencing solutions allow these professionals to provide expert opinions and corroborate evidence from their office. Conference room environments equipped with a telepresence system and dual displays, also allow the legal team to view the expert on one screen and the shared content on the other.

Additionally, the ability to record these conferences offers increased protection and flexibility for trial. Traditionally the law has required a witness to be present at the time of the proceedings. However, recent rule changes have allowed, upon request, subject matter experts to be excused from appearing in person, and allowing their video testimony to be used instead. This is often done in two parts with a “discovery” deposition taken first, followed by a “trial testimony” deposition.
COLLABORATION AND TEAM WORK PLAY a major role in preparing a case; tasks can include researching previous cases for precedent, filing necessary paperwork, composing opening remarks, and more. Keeping simultaneous cases organized can be a daunting task, especially when coordinating the multitude of tasks that need to be completed. Additionally, teams often need to meet to discuss action items and task updates.

Cloud visual collaboration tools offer an effective way to manage and organize this process. These tools not only provide a forum to connect multiple participants over video, but it can store meeting notes, chat logs, and more to provide an organized way to keep track of case progress. For example, a partner can have a virtual meeting space dedicated to each trial he is working on, along with a one dedicated for weekly partner briefings.

Anyone associated with the case can be invited to this space to view tasks, post updates, and meet with other team members. Additionally, participants have the ability to join and shift meetings across multiple devices. For example, if an attorney has to leave to get to the courthouse he can shift the meeting from his desktop computer to his iPhone with the click of a button without disrupting the meeting.

PREPARING FOR TRIAL CAN BE A LENGTHY process depending on the number of witnesses and where they are geographically located. The hassle of coordinating travel arrangements, lodging requirements, and security passes is compounded by the number of attorneys involved, the timing and trial court demands, as well as the obligations and degree of cooperation of all parties involved. Video conferencing solutions allow depositions to be conducted regardless of where participants are or what device they are using.

Additionally, cloud solutions offer increased flexibility by connecting consumer desktop and mobile applications with traditional room endpoints. This allows lawyers to depose clients who are unable to make the trip to the office, or connect lawyers who are unable to be physically present during the deposition. Recording capabilities also allow firms to retain a copy of the depositions which can be used to discredit a witness in the event their story changes.

FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES are also recognizing the benefits of video conferencing. As a result, they are beginning to implement video solutions that allow for remote hearings. Remote hearings provide numerous benefits, as they eliminate the need to travel to courts or agency offices. This not only removes the travel time and expenses typically associated with these cases, but can also reduce the court delays resulting from people arriving late because of traffic or other unforeseen events.

Overflow hearings for in-demand locations can also be effectively distributed to other sites that have less traffic and more time slots available. As a result, law firms are able to receive appointments quicker than they would for an in-person hearing. This helps contribute to faster case resolution and allows firms to handle more clients in less time. The systems used for remote hearings are easy to use and require minimal training and system management, ultimately becoming very cost effective for law firms.
FIRMS CAN USE VIDEO CONFERENCING to increase the geographical pool of candidates exponentially. Instead of solely focusing on local job applicants, organizations can conduct initial interviews with the best and brightest, regardless of where they are located.

Video interviews assist in the screening process by reducing the need for initial in-person interviews, while also providing far more insight than traditional audio calls. For example, hiring managers are able to distinguish facial expressions and other non-verbal clues, offering insight into a candidate’s personality along with helping to determine whether or not the applicant will be a good fit for the company. This additional clarity aids in the decision making process and helps determine who moves on to the next round.

Video also allows partners who are traveling or otherwise away from the office to meet with potential candidates without having to rearrange their schedule. Partners can host a video interview from their smartphone or tablet anywhere there is a Wi-Fi or 4G connection, such as a hotel room or court parking lot. In addition, law firms that incorporate the latest technology differentiate themselves as progressive and therefore are more attractive to new recruits.

PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING LEGAL Education is required for attorneys to maintain their license to practice law. CLE activities are often offered throughout the year by state bar associations, national legal organizations and other legal associates. Moreover, many organizations are beginning to offer classes over video. These classes offer numerous benefits including convenience as attorneys are able to attend the classes and receive credit right from their office.

Additionally, firms can host their own CLE sessions from a central location and broadcast them across multiple sites. For example, a guest speaker can present content in a conference room at headquarters while satellite offices connect to the location over video. This creates a virtual classroom environment where participants can view the presentation remotely, as well as, ask questions and interact with the speaker.

These sessions can also be recorded and archived for Video on Demand, allowing attorneys to view them at a later date. Firms can also use these virtual classrooms to update paralegals and other employees on policy and other key updates.

LAW FIRMS THAT UTILIZE VISUAL COLLABORATION solutions can truly improve the quality of legal care that clients receive, while also creating operational efficiencies that allow them to see more clients in less time. Video solutions can connect lawyers, paralegals, clients, experts, and more in a fraction of the time, while also eliminating unnecessary expenses. As a result, client legal expenses decrease, while the firm’s billable hours increase, resulting in a higher profit margin. IVCi offers a full range of legal solutions and will work with your organization to develop, implement and support a robust solution that fits your current and future needs, allowing your team to provide the highest quality of legal care.