

Xerox DocuShare Helps Set New Standards for Service at Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley

Web Based Solution Puts Law Firm in the Lead

Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley LLP, one of the largest law firms in the nation, recently embarked on a technology journey that will forever change how it conducts business. With over 680 employees, 300 of them attorneys, the firm practices all types of business-related law from ten locations on the East coast. The firm prides itself on offering convenient and responsive service, and has built its client strategy around this quality. Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley also recognized that timely, effective communication of information was a critical deliverable in a geographically-dispersed firm. State-of-the-art technology solutions took a leading position in Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley's customer service strategy with the addition of Xerox DocuShare.

Improved collaboration and ease of handling documents for clients was the top priority. The e-mail systems needed to be harnessed, and pockets of information unified under a corporate-wide intranet to optimize distribution to employees, clients, and specialists. For nearly a year and a half, the firm searched for the right document management application to meet these criteria. The firm had already successfully outsourced its mail and copy center functions to Xerox, and was interested to learn more about the document management solutions Xerox had to offer. In response to this request, the Xerox sales team proposed the implementation of a document management system using DocuShare as the document repository, and the Xerox DigiPath solution to convert hard copy documents to searchable objects prior to uploading to the repository.

Anthony Hazboun, Manager for Advanced Services, Xerox Business Services, indicated that the objective of the solution was twofold: First, to break down the barriers that blocked information flow among team members at different locations, in different organizations, and with different computer platforms; Second, to help attorneys manage specifications, briefs, proposals, and other critical documents that are typically created and used collaboratively, and that required version control and revision tracking.

"My initial reaction was love at first sight," said Laurence Liss, Chief Technology Officer for Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley. "DocuShare's internet orientation was very desirable and helped us establish a readily maintainable and affordable means of communicating with our clients. The pricing looked excellent, especially when one considers that many performance benefits and features not available competitively-priced applications are included."

As a law firm, Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley is committed to service. Attorneys compare the firm to concierge service, committed to quality, speed, cost-efficiency, opportunity-creation and teamwork. DocuShare neatly aligns with the firm's philosophy. "The system provides members of the firm and our clients the ability to collaborate from anywhere in the world, securely across the Internet using a standard web browser. This provides a unique, value-added service for our clients. Using this tool we believe we will obtain important productivity improvements for both attorneys and support staff," said Liss.



Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley has embraced the Internet as a means for reaching clients and sharing information



DocuShare has been integrated with Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley intranet presence, offering a seamless transition from straight web pages to a secure, easily-maintained document repository



In just a few months DocuShare has proved to be the most effective method for sharing information amongst co-workers and clients

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The full text search capabilities and the electronic storage of documents can save clients thousands of dollars. "I am working with a client on a business transaction worth over \$35 million," stated Larry Beaser, former counsel to a Pennsylvania governor, former Chancellor for the Philadelphia's Bar Association and a member of the Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley Technology Committee. "We measured the growth of associated documents in inches each day; by the end of 1997 the stack of documentation was over four feet high. We could not adequately track down specific information in the paperwork. If someone needed an interpretation of a document it would take a staff member or me a significant amount of time to pull together the information. The paperwork was difficult to manage. With DocuShare, I am able to find specific information with just a few mouse clicks, saving time and money," continued Mr. Beaser.

"Before DocuShare, collaboration was difficult, involving a combination of e-mail and faxing. We had between 15 and 20 servers, each with its own document management configuration. Novell shared directories provided limited access internally, and did not allow us to share information outside of the office at all. Additionally, we faced the security and data integrity problems associated with e-mail and attachments," said Mr. Liss.

"Previously, I lugged home information every day, but now I can log on to the Internet at home and access any information I need," stated Mr. Beaser. "As an

attorney, it is important to track successful actions. I might spend an hour or so getting a phrase to read just right. DocuShare's version control function helps to track the history of one's work. Additionally, I have been able to easily teach my clients to use it, giving everyone access to the same documents."

"We recognized Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley needed a solution which crossed all media, all document types, all storage and delivery mechanisms," stated Mr. Hazboun. "As multiple type objects can be stored within the DocuShare repository, attorneys can search both digitally created and hard-copy documents in a single swoop. Stored objects or documents can be viewed at the attorney's desktop, routed to the local desktop printer or, for large print volumes, output on the 135 pages per minute Xerox DocuTech printer in the centralized copy shop. A robust, sustainable solution which meets Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley's highly-specific needs was crafted using off-the-shelf Xerox applications and hardware."

"DocuShare maps to the way people work today, sharing information across geographical, functional and system boundaries. In the spirit of the Web, DocuShare creates a common ground among users. Regardless of technology expertise, each can participate in the collaborative process of developing and sharing information," said Doug McLean, vice president, sales and marketing, Xerox Internet and Software Solutions (XISS).

DocuShare was implemented in less than

four months, using the firm's training staff in cooperation with Xerox. "We first determined what needed to be taught: how would the user benefit from the technology and how would we demonstrate practical ways to use it," said Diane O. McCullough, training manager for Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley. "From this we selected the topics to train people in, and determined the amount of time required, keeping in mind that attorneys and paralegals bill for their time and classroom time takes away from their billable hours. We set aside 2 hours for the DocuShare training, with our one hour internet browser class being a prerequisite. A trainer from Xerox taught our IT staff onsite in 2 sessions: a general user training class, then an administrative class. We then identified a beta group and trained that department. We then trained the rest of the firm with 2 trainers in an 18-seat classroom, giving them total hands-on training."



Even the most detailed information is stored within DocuShare in a structured, easily-accessible manner for maximum usability

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Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley

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Overall, Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley's staff had an easy time learning to use DocuShare. "Because of the browser interface and the ease of use, it only took a few hours for most people to master the application. Sometimes it would only take minutes for someone to feel comfortable with DocuShare," said McCullough.

"After our people realized how easy it was to collaborate with their clients over the Internet, they really took to DocuShare. It makes collaboration much easier because it is accessible immediately, 24/7, from anywhere you have an internet connection," said McCullough.

Although DocuShare has been in place less than a year, its use is growing throughout the firm. One of the senior partners who is on the Technology Committee immediately started loading his department's forms into DocuShare and, within a month, had over 700 documents in the repository. The collaboration efforts within his department have increased, and attorneys no longer have to hunt down documents from previous transactions or amongst themselves.

Another senior partner has scanned in several binders worth of documents for collaboration with his client. They are scanned and saved in Adobe Acrobat PDF format, making it easy to perform a full-text search for key words with DocuShare's built-in search tools. This has eliminated several file drawers of paper. Attorneys who often work from remote sites use DocuShare to access forms and documents, rather than dialing in to their PCs at the office. A popular Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley DocuShare collection is the useful web

sites section. Diane McCullough created hyperlinks to hundreds of web sites of specific interest to the firm. Attorneys and staff now routinely reference this collection first when doing research.

DocuShare also contributes to enhanced communication between the different groups at Blank Rome & McCauley creating an environment of improved "community spirit." The firm's internal news bulletin, published 3 times a week, now gets posted to the "Firm Communications" area in DocuShare and people access and read the bulletin at their convenience, from anywhere. This has eliminated the copying and distribution of this formerly paper-based document, reducing time, cost, and labor. Back issues are also available online, archived in DocuShare and fully searchable should anyone need to find specific information contained in an older edition. DocuShare is also used to advertise items for sale, birth/death announcements, sporting activities, and other social activities that previously resulted in numerous e-mails.

Clearly, DocuShare is giving Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley an edge in service. Not only is it making their work more manageable, it is providing clients cost savings while improving collaboration among its legal teams and their clients. Staying ahead of the competition means doing things more efficiently, using fewer resources, but most importantly it means being the best in your profession. Capitalizing on the benefits of technology, Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley are confidently setting the standard for legal service in to the 21st century.

HOW THEY DO IT

DocuShare is installed on a server running Windows NT 4.0 and Microsoft IIS. The firm also uses Novell's 4.11 network operating system. Users access DocuShare from their Windows 95 desktop systems using their web browsers. The overall installation serves nearly 700 users in ten locations via an 800-node network.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ORDER DOCUSHARE

Please contact your authorized Xerox Channel Partner or Xerox sales representative. Or call the DocuShare sales department directly:

United States: 1-800-428-2995

Outside U.S.: 1-650-813-7279

Europe: +44 1488 657686

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