



Case In Point

High-Volume File Management Made Efficient with RFID Technology

“Once I saw the product demo at ALA, I realized 3M RFID Tracking Solutions could take our IP department’s productivity to the next level, allowing us to retrieve client records at a moment’s notice. It took only a few weeks of the beta test for the skeptics in the department to become believers.”

*—Monte Malone, Director of Administration,
Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P., Dallas, Texas*

The Law Firm

One of the largest law firms in the nation and the world, Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. is a full-service firm of more than 800 attorneys in eight locations throughout the United States and three international offices. Its Intellectual Property and Technology Practice Group encompasses one of the largest concentrations of intellectual property (IP) attorneys in the country. The IP department in Dallas alone manages several thousand active legal files and averages up to 1,500 new files added to inventory each year.

The Need

Fulbright was managing its physical files with a state-of-the-art barcoding system. But management recognized that barcode tracking had limited capabilities and a high potential for compliance issues. For one thing, the barcode system made the task of taking inventory extremely arduous and therefore feasible only once a month, at best. With that large an interval between inventories, the incidence of misplaced and misfiled client records was increasing. Furthermore, barcode systems often are susceptible to lapses of compliance among employees, who must take care to properly record check-ins and check-outs. Although Fulbright’s barcode system was delivering a fairly high level of accuracy, the Intellectual Property and Technology Practice Group was still struggling to locate files, and was open to new methods to improve the situation.

The Solution

The administrative director at Fulbright saw the potential for productivity and process improvements when given a demonstration of 3M’s RFID Tracking System at an industry trade show. 3M crafted a beta pilot for Fulbright’s IP department in Dallas to see if the system would indeed bring the department to the level they wanted and improve the process of managing their legal files.

The installation of the 3M™ RFID Tracking System was accomplished in phases that provided minimal disruption. At no time during the installation process was there an interruption in the day-to-day business of running the practice. With the system installed and proving performance ability, an interesting development occurred. Initially, Fulbright elected not to tag working files with 3M RFID Tags. However, when a working file went missing, the law firm ordered 3,000 additional 3M RFID Tags to manage the working files. The 3M™ RFID Tracking System became the solution to managing and locating all files.

The Results

Prior to implementing the 3M™ RFID Tracking System, Fulbright reported a 65 percent rate of file accuracy, an impressive rate of accuracy for any tracking system. After the 3M System was installed, the accuracy rate immediately jumped to 95 percent! In contrast with the barcode system’s compliance issues, Fulbright was thrilled to discover that the 3M system



combined easy-to-use RFID technology with intuitive software tools, and employee compliance with the system skyrocketed.

The 3M™ RFID Tracking System eliminates unnecessary time spent searching for misplaced files. The total timesavings per year with the Tracking System are estimated at \$40,000. And, most important to Fulbright, the greatest result is the ability to respond in a timely manner to clients. Instead of saying, “Let me find that file and get back to

you,” employees are saying, “One moment . . . What can I help you with?” This efficiency helps the firm uphold its reputation for providing superior client service.

The success of the 3M™ RFID Tracking System in the Intellectual Property department at the Dallas office of Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. has prompted the firm to implement the system in other departments at the Dallas office.

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