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Hot new products for lawyers and law office administrators.

Automation Meets Practice Management

By Neil J. Squillante
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Many law firms have more than enough work but not enough profits to show for it. Two solutions exist. You could raise rates and receive push back from clients. Alternatively, you can use technology to improve automation, enabling your firm to handle more work without raising rates (not to mention headcount).

Synergy Matters ... in One Sentence
Launched this week, Legal Matters Software's Synergy Matters is a practice management system with an emphasis on automation thanks to tools for time capture, cost recovery, document management, and faxing.

The Killer Feature
Synergy Matters contains a number of technologies to prevent lost billable time. For example, it automatically tracks the time you spend on a matter (e.g., drafting documents, writing email messages, etc.). This eliminates the need to use timers and other manual time-tracking methods. A review window lists all your captured time by matter with a corresponding description. After editing (if required), you can post these time entries to any accounting system.

Similarly, Synergy Matters, automatically tracks your scans, faxes, and prints. If you charge for costs, Synergy Matters can automatically post these to your accounting system. If you don't, you can use this data to adjust your rates to make sure your disbursements don't eat into your profits.

"Synergy Matters is the result of eight years working with law firms and refining our software to produce the easiest-to-use tool to enhance productivity in a law firm environment", Vice President of Sales John Ryan told us.

Other Notable Features
When you create a new document or email message from within a matter, Synergy Matter automatically saves it there. Thanks to an integration with Outlook, you can save incoming email to a matter with one click.
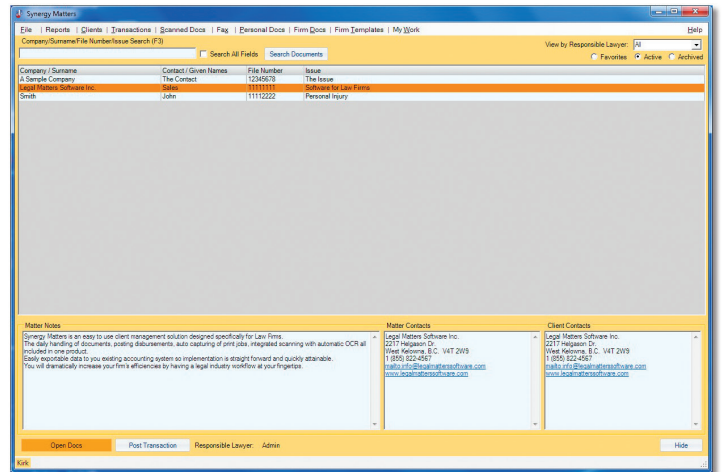
Synergy Matters works with a number of scanners, enabling you to scan directly to a matter in PDF format. Built-in OCR software makes all scanned PDF documents searchable. You'll also find tools for converting Word documents into PDF format, combining multiple documents into a single PDF document, and Bates stamping PDF documents.

The document management system features collaborative tools and preservation of revisions. You can share a document with anyone by clicking the "For Review" button, which creates a link to the original document. Synergy matters automatically saves changes others make as a new version of the document, thus preserving all previous versions.

What Else Should You Know?
Synergy Matters offers fax server functionality when connected to the optional Synergy Fax Appliance. This enables everyone to send faxes from their PC. Synergy Matters automatically saves a copy of each fax with proof of delivery in the corresponding matter. You can route incoming faxes to individuals, groups, your records department, etc. Synergy Matters can automatically bill for all incoming and outgoing faxes.

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