

eBILLINGHUB CASE STUDY

NILAN JOHNSON
LEWIS PA

TAKING GUESSWORK OUT OF THE E-BILLING PROCESS



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MANAGING INCREASED BILLING DEMANDS

The use of electronic billing, or e-billing, has grown exponentially over the last few years for Nilan Johnson Lewis, a Minneapolis firm that focuses on 6 areas of practice with 50 lawyers. Compare the firm's volume of e-bills: In 2004, they billed out 71; today, the billing department processes just under 2,000 annual e-bills.

In 2008, Billing Coordinator Kathryn Snyder, who handles all the legal billing for the firm, recognized that the trend toward e-billing was only going to continue. Nilan Johnson's overall client base was growing, as was the number of matters for each client. Additionally, e-billing demands typically come from larger clients, including insurance companies, which have very complex billing requirements.

At the same time, Snyder was experiencing special requests for paper-based invoices as well, such as client-specific task code sets, custom templates, and special charts. Plus, she handles client and matter management and rates administration, which required more attention during the weakened economic climate.

All of these factors prompted Snyder to seek a solution to streamline her e-billing process. It had to interface with all of the different third party spend management vendors and integrate with the firm's financial and practice management system. After some research and due diligence, the firm selected eBillingHub®.

eBillingHub, part of the Thomson Reuters family of innovative solutions for professional services firms, is a fully integrated, web-based electronic billing solution. Delivering business value to hundreds of law firms worldwide, eBillingHub works seamlessly with a broad range of financial platforms.

TRANSFORMING THE E-BILLING PROCESS

Before eBillingHub, Snyder was spending an inordinate amount of time managing the e-billing process. She was dealing with about 12 different spend management vendors, each with a separate logon procedure, distinct format requirements, and other nuances. For example, some vendors provide notifications of invoice acceptance, while others might not send any. Some vendors only allow invoices to be submitted one at a time based on a matter number.

Furthermore, each client has its own customized e-invoice requirements, including modified LEDES formats, task/activity code requirements, restrictions on block billing, special override rates or discounts, prior approvals for fee earners and rates, and the list goes on. Each invoice took a great deal of Snyder's time in balancing the conditions set by both parties.

The central login to the eBillingHub Management Dashboard is Snyder's favorite feature because it provides a single point to easily submit, track, and analyze real-time invoice status with all of the spend management vendors. Now she is able to submit pre-bills into the eBillingHub trial posting function that highlights any errors before they are officially submitted to the client. "There are so many details to be aware of with e-billing, and eBillingHub is instrumental in helping me get them right the first time," adds Snyder. She is able to eliminate billing errors with the eBillingHub innovative rules engine, which ensures basic criteria are met in the pre-bill stage. Validated e-bills are then forwarded to the client's spend management vendor to be processed.

For instance, she has one client that will not accept an invoice in which the timecard narrative is more than 255 characters. If an invoice features an entry that has exceeded that number, eBillingHub instantly provides an on-screen warning and sends Snyder a notification indicating the line item that contains the error. This trial posting step enables her to proactively address any billing issues and maintain a history of errors to refine the process for each client.

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Located in Minneapolis, Nilan Johnson offers services in 6 areas of practice with its 50 lawyers: labor and employment, business law, intellectual property litigation, product liability and mass tort litigation, commercial litigation, and health care. The shareholders founded the firm in 1996 to introduce strategic and more effective ways to solve clients' legal challenges.

CHALLENGE

To manage clients' complex e-billing requests with an automated and streamlined solution.

WHY eBILLINGHUB?

eBillingHub is a simple, cost-effective solution designed to make law firms' billing systems more efficient, speed cash flow, and provide more trouble-free service to their clients.

BENEFITS

- Increased billing efficiency
- Increased confidence and visibility into e-billing process
- Stronger client relationships

Snyder is able to correct most errors in the pre-bill stage using eBillingHub Tools without having to go back to the proforma editing function. The fully integrated editor allows her to make minor changes for all LEDES-compatible invoices, such as format compliance or adding task codes on the fly.

The Status Tab is a quick way for Snyder to keep track of everything on one screen, such as rejected/accepted invoices, total of invoices with AR balance, and held invoices. "Before eBillingHub, I would have to log on to each separate spend management vendor's site to track down the details of individual invoices. Now I log on to the eBillingHub site, and have all the information I need at my fingertips," says Snyder.

The entire e-billing process has been transformed at Nilan Johnson. "eBillingHub has helped us create a clean month end because we can transmit and track e-bills in one central location. It allows us to more clearly understand turnaround time to payment," she continues.

"Regardless of the client format requests, the eBillingHub team has been able to accommodate any nuances. They've never said no to any format amendment. The eBillingHub team is an important ally for the billing department."

Kathryn Snyder
Billing Coordinator

UNPARALLELED SERVICES AND SUPPORT

One of the main benefits of the eBillingHub software as a service (SaaS) delivery model is that instead of spending time installing and testing the solution, the eBillingHub support team can focus on providing best-in-class support services.

The company now supports a multitude of spend management vendors and are adding new ones all the time. "This is the most amazing collaboration I've ever seen in this industry," adds Snyder.

In addition, because of the unique position of eBillingHub in the e-billing chain, it is familiar with clients' e-billing requirements better than anyone. Once Snyder hands

over a client's e-billing implementation package, the eBillingHub services team sets up the parameters directly in the system. Snyder no longer has to spend time dealing with technicalities like the custom changes to the LEDES standard.

"Regardless of the client format requests, the eBillingHub team has been able to accommodate any nuances. They've never said no to any format amendment," says Snyder. "And the whole support process is just brilliant. They always acknowledge my requests immediately and resolve any issues quickly—usually within the same day. The eBillingHub team is an important ally for the billing department."

THE PAY OFF

"I feel we implemented the system at the perfect time, as our e-billing has grown exponentially since that point. eBillingHub justifies itself in every way for our firm," says Snyder.

Increased Billing Efficiency – Because eBillingHub is a centralized, web-based system, Snyder personally saves a lot of time. The time required to transmit invoices has been considerably shortened even though the number of clients that require e-bills is constantly increasing. eBillingHub also helps the firm implement client billing guidelines efficiently and ensures the lawyers adhere to specific client requests from the start. This avoids spending time addressing billing discrepancies later on.

Increased Confidence and Visibility – "I have much better control over the entire e-billing process, which gives me confidence in knowing what's going on at any given time," Snyder says. She can easily check the status and details of all e-invoices, which has been a benefit to the AR department.

Stronger Client Relationships – "eBillingHub enables us to better meet our clients' growing needs, thus building stronger relationships. It signals to them that we are willing to invest in resources that increase efficiency," explains Snyder.

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Kathryn Snyder

To learn more about eBillingHub or for a global list of office locations, visit ebillinghub.com.

