



Fortune Manning sees Cloud as the future and shifts to BigHand digital dictation for “work anywhere” flexibility

Fortune Manning, an Auckland based firm of 50 staff specialising in insurance litigation, as well as commercial and private client practices, chooses BigHand digital dictation as part of a wider strategic move to an outsourced managed IT environment to ul

The fundamental decision to move their IT infrastructure to an outsourced managed services model meant Fortune Manning had to transfer their on-premise servers, desktops and applications to virtual Citrix servers, thin clients and applications hosted in the cloud; this also allowed the firm to move IT expenses from the capital expenses budget to Opex. As Tanya Mayantseva, the firm's operations manager, explains; "Cloud was seen as the future."

"The Partners were skeptical initially at the idea of relinquishing their information into the cloud. However, the decision was an easy one to make given the disaster recovery and business continuity benefits.... if the sprinklers ever went off we would have lost all our information," says Mayantseva.

The firm's 30 solicitors had previously used a proprietary digital dictation solution; however it was likely to experience performance limitations as it wasn't supported in the new virtual environment. This meant Fortune Manning needed to explore software that would be supported in the new environment that could stream audio data, in real time, between thin clients and servers in a Citrix environment without any delay; "we went to tender and asked for proposals for digital dictation," says Mayantseva.

The firm looked at three options that could operate securely across the Citrix platform. "We received positive feedback in the industry about BigHand - the system and the service."

"BigHand allows much greater transparency and we can see the whole team - there is better workflow co-ordination. For me, managing this is a piece of cake - it takes just seconds."

The fact that the BigHand solution is dictation hardware agnostic was important to the firm which did not want to be limited or forced into making particular hardware purchases. BigHand allows their solicitors to now dictate from anywhere on their iPhone or Android and have the voice file or instruction sent securely into the workflow with one click. "We want them to be able to dictate wherever they are when they need to," she says.

While the migration to BigHand required a small "mind shift" from staff initially, it is delivering tangible benefits daily. "It's working really well and the reporting in the system is very good," says Mayantseva.

Where there is no reticence is about the benefits that the BigHand solution in a virtual environment is delivering; "We had digital dictation before but we definitely see benefits from this system because of the transparency and the ability to dictate notes from everywhere."

Mayantseva notes that lawyers can prioritise their transcriptions and voice instructions themselves, or she can use her Work Administrator privileges to easily assign work to support staff. She says the transparency that BigHand allows prompts support staff to proactively share work amongst themselves in order to keep on top of the dictation/transcription workload.

In addition, Tanya and the firm's Partners are exploring how to take advantage of other BigHand features, such as the speech recognition (speech to text) functionality, to allow fee earners to expedite work they currently self-type, such as emails and file notes, as well as provide an additional resource during periods of limited support so they can maintain the same standard of service and have more time to spend with clients.

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