

Case Study

legal

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Cipriani & Werner, P.C.

The verdict is in: How Ricoh's Hosted Legal Desktop delivered reliable, secure and knowledgeable IT support for a regional law firm

"It made all the sense in the world to switch to Ricoh IT Services. They could speak to the specific challenges that law firms face because they had already addressed those challenges for other firms."

– Patricia A. Haeck
Vice President of Administration
Cipriani & Werner, P.C.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Cipriani &
Werner, PC

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Cipriani & Werner, PC is a well-respected law firm in the mid-Atlantic region that defends businesses, banks and insurers in disputes regarding premises, transportation, professional and general liability, workers' compensation, employment and cyber security defense matters. With more than two dozen practice areas and 135 attorneys spread out among 11 offices in six states and the District of Columbia, Cipriani & Werner is known for thoroughly and aggressively representing its clients' interests. Whether focusing on the demands of the courtroom or developing successful strategies with clients, the law firm has prospered through the years by consistently providing a high level of service to its clients.

CHALLENGE

Attorneys definitely don't work 9 to 5. Their days are long, often stretching well into the evening hours. They aren't always at the office with a networked desktop computer at arms length. Increasingly, they're using their personal device to access information—anywhere, anytime—to construct their case.

Having a reliable IT infrastructure is absolutely essential for a litigation firm like Pittsburgh-based Cipriani & Werner, PC where old school and new school ways of working frequently collide. Highly seasoned attorneys, coined "digital immigrants" because they cut their legal teeth in the analogue world, are easily frustrated and frequently vocal if technology fails. New generations of attorneys—"digital natives" born into the world of computers and the internet—simply expect technology to work 24/7/365.

CHALLENGE

- Network reliability concerns with previous cloud SaaS provider
- Growing law firm with multi-generational users
- Increased potential for data breaches

SOLUTION

- RICOH Hosted Legal Desktop
- Full support for Microsoft® applications and legal software
- Anywhere, anytime access to information—from any device
- Secure proprietary and client data

RESULTS

- Knowledgeable, reliable partner for outsourced cloud-based SaaS solution
- Standardized, simplified rollout
- Sound investment to prevent cyber breach

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With plans to add more locations and bring additional attorneys on board, the firm knew that its network infrastructure had to be improved. Advances in technology and cyber crimes were moving too fast for its internal systems to keep up. It was time to get help from an experienced team of IT professionals—and move to IT outsourcing and a cloud computing platform.

Vice President of Administration Patricia Haeck sums it up best—her role at Cipriani & Werner had become “the complaint department.” The complexity of having in-house servers running at each of its office locations led to a steady stream of in-person visits and phone calls about the law firm’s increasingly unreliable network.

The complaints were typical. Attorneys had to shut down one application before they could open another. Certain applications corrupted others. There was prolonged downtime during network interruptions. The VPN (Virtual Private Network) used to access desktop computers remotely was hit or miss.

“I was living in the trenches dealing with our network issues so often that I hardly had time for anything else,” said Haeck.

Enhancing the security of the law firm’s network was also a growing priority. Real or potential cyber attacks not only touched the clients in its cyber security practice, online thievery was a very real concern to the law firm itself. Like other law firms, C&W could be a prime target for ransom ware, with highly sensitive personal, client and adversary information housed on its internal network – including materials such as financial information, patient health records, patent, trademark and copyright information.

“We have an obligation to our clients to secure and protect access to our database, and remain compliant with legal ethics and regulations,” said Jack Kincaid, chief operating officer at Cipriani & Werner, PC.

“We wanted a partner that understood the legal industry and proactively implemented patches and updates before we suffered.”

In 2012, Cipriani & Werner signed on with an IT outsourcing firm that provided cloud computing services to help stabilize its network. While this was an improvement compared to in-house servers, the arrangement proved lacking. The cloud provider treated the law firm like a small fish in an ocean of larger, more revenue-generating clients.

“We weren’t being supported the way we needed to be by the provider,” said Haeck. “We were having some serious downtime issues and it often took more time to correct than we were prepared to accept.”

In 2014, after a mere 18 months with its cloud provider, Kincaid and Haeck decided the firm had to do better. Haeck attended the national conference and expo for the Association of Legal Administrators in search of a more knowledgeable, attentive partner. She spoke to every exhibitor of IT software and managed services at the show.

Of all of the exhibitors Haeck spoke to, only one had the total package—Ricoh.

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As a leading provider of managed IT, cloud, data center and professional services, Ricoh has thousands of clients and a dedicated practice for Am Law 100 through boutique-sized law firms. Most impressive to Cipriani & Werner, Ricoh had proven expertise and products specifically designed for the legal industry.

“It made all the sense in the world to switch to Ricoh, said Haeck. “They could speak to the specific challenges that law firms face because they had already addressed those challenges for other firms.”

SOLUTION

Putting the lifeblood of your law firm—information—in the hands of a third party can be nerve racking. But, confident it had found the right partner for the job, Cipriani & Werner moved forward comfortably with Ricoh.

“Ricoh demonstrated a strong commitment to our firm. I knew there would be a credible answer on the other end of the phone if something went wrong,” said Haeck.

“Working with Ricoh gives us great comfort. We’re confident we have done everything humanly possible to protect our proprietary and client data.”

The team implemented Ricoh’s Hosted Legal Desktop solution for Cipriani & Werner, running all of the firm’s applications at its world-class data center and transparently streaming them to all the law offices via a dedicated connection. The solution supports all Microsoft Office® Professional applications as well as a large variety of software packages designed specifically for law firms and other professional services organizations.

With the Ricoh solution in place, Cipriani & Werner is now fully supported no matter what employees are working on—email, word processing, spreadsheets, presentations, databases, time and billing, case management, litigation support, document management, etc. And with seamless remote access to all of its applications, the law firm’s attorneys have true anytime, anywhere access to the business information they need from Ricoh’s hosted environment.

All of Cipriani & Werner’s systems and applications are hosted at the remote location and are fully managed by the Ricoh team. In addition, rather than investing in new hardware and software, the law firm was able to use all of its existing workstations in operation.

None of Cipriani & Werner’s data is housed locally, helping to ensure the security of the firm’s information. Ricoh stores all the firm’s information in SSAE-16 compliant data centers, using multiple physical, technical and administrative safeguards to control access and minimize risk and redundant infrastructure to maximize the availability of data to authorized users.

“Ricoh knows the legal industry and the vulnerabilities of law firms,” said Kincaid. “Working with Ricoh gives us great comfort. We’re confident we have done everything humanly possible to protect our proprietary and client data.”

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RESULTS

As Cipriani & Werner continues to add more attorneys and expand its practice areas, Kincaid and Haeck are breathing a sigh of relief. The days of constantly fielding technology complaints and worrying about data vulnerability are in the past—freeing them to focus on other more productive operational and administrative duties. And if something does go amiss, they know they can come straight to Ricoh for the in-depth legal industry expertise and a quick resolution.

“Ricoh is so good, they usually have the answer for me even before I’m done asking the question. This partnership is very refreshing,” said Haeck.

Switching to Ricoh’s Hosted Legal Desktop had to be seamless for all staff and attorneys at the firm—digital immigrants and natives alike. To make that happen, the Ricoh team conducted a standardized and simplified rollout, beginning with web-based training for all of Cipriani & Werner’s locations and ending with a team of Ricoh employees on hand at every location the morning the solution went live.

“It required immediate success to make the attorneys believers. They had to be able to log on as if nothing happened,” said Kincaid. “Patty and the Ricoh team made that work.”

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From a pure cost standpoint, a law firm could make the case that buying the necessary IT hardware and software—and having an in-house IT person on staff—could cost less than an outsourced SaaS solution and managed IT services. But when you factor in downtime, attorneys’ time and time spent by operations and administrative staff resolving issues—or worse, contending with a cyber breach—the additional cost is justified.

“If you want to do it right and you want to satisfy your clients, attorneys and cyber insurance carrier, outsourced IT and a cloud computing solution is more than a legitimate cost,” said Kincaid. “You don’t want to save a few dollars and be breached.”

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