



Safeguard Your Bottom Line

Better Remote Practice Management and Client Service Are a Focal Point in Times of COVID

In recent months, the legal industry has taken an enormous hit with layoffs, furloughs, compensation cuts and more. Nothing since the Great Recession has had a more negative impact on law firms than the coronavirus, making protecting the bottom line an even higher priority. As firms strive to safeguard from the economic fallout of the pandemic and legal teams become leaner due to reduced schedules, legal professionals are grappling with a new reality: how to do more with less.

Working in a Brave New (Post-Pandemic) World

As of April 2020, most U.S. employees were working from home, at least temporarily, due to the coronavirus pandemic. According to a recent survey, two-thirds of all employees work remotely at least part of the workweek, and 44 percent report working from home five or more days a week, a 17 percent increase from before the pandemic. Just 34 percent of respondents are not working remotely at all, likely because many have been laid off or furloughed.¹

In a world suddenly upended, legal teams must survive the impacts of the pandemic by improving practice management and elevating client service. And this must be done while conducting business remotely – a challenging feat for sure.

There are tools on the market, however, to help accomplish this. Advanced digital tools improve productivity by reducing manual and administrative processes. For example, advances in AI technology allow legal teams to streamline repetitive and manual documentation processes and ultimately shift focus on business growth, rather than administrative tasks. Most importantly, this can be done without breaking your budget.

Where Voice Recognition Technology Steps In

According to the American Bar Association, voice recognition technology is one of the easiest ways to cut hours from your daily workflow and improve productivity. The ABA highlights that this cost-effective efficiency driver has come of age in recent years, making dictaphones, miniature cassette tapes and the time-consuming back-and-forth between you and your administrative assistant a thing of the past.

“The advent of voice-recognition dictation,” the ABA says, “has ushered in an entirely new and streamlined way to dictate documents.”²

Indeed, many of us have become accustomed to using speech recognition technology daily, in the form of smart-speakers and other voice enabled services. Considering this technology is likely to advance even further and gain wider adoption, how exactly does its use apply to the legal space?

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– American Bar Association

What AI-Powered Speech Recognition Means for Legal Teams

Speech recognition technology – that is, technology platforms specifically adapted for the legal industry – enables legal teams to dictate and create documents quickly and accurately. Michael Millward, Senior Product Manager at Nuance Communications, explains that such technology makes dictating and creating documents up to three times faster than typing and with up to 99 percent accuracy from the first use.

While consumer-grade voice recognition systems built into smartphones and smart-speakers are hugely beneficial for personal use, it is key for legal teams to leverage a platform trained to recognize tens of thousands of U.S. legal terms. For example, Millward explains that Dragon Legal Anywhere – a cloud-based speech recognition solution – has a recognition engine trained using words from legal documents, making it highly reliable and useful for legal teams. What's more, this speech recognition software can even accurately transcribe accents – like Hispanic or Australian – and other unique speech characteristics.

“The immediate adaptation is definitely a key feature here,” says Millward. “Right away, once you start using [Dragon Legal Anywhere], it immediately adapts to your personal speech idiosyncrasies, your accent, any kind of pattern you have.”

He explains that training the software to recognize an accent or idiosyncrasy is seamless on the user's part. “The more you use it, the better it does. [The software] will continuously improve and optimize the more you use it.”

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**– Michael Millward
Senior Product Manager,
Nuance Communications**



Think of speech recognition as another keyboard – using your voice, however, instead of your fingertips. Millward adds that it's possible to use the technology to perform small tasks with built-in commands. Creating your own commands, inserting boilerplate text and editing on the fly are additional capabilities.

Here are four tangible benefits of speech recognition technology that tie directly to improving productivity among legal teams:



1. High accuracy. Legal speech recognition technology comes loaded with thousands of specialized legal terms, enabling professionals to dictate contracts, briefs and format legal citations from anywhere. Legal teams can also create, import and share custom word lists relevant to specific clients and practice areas.



2. Reduced transcription time and costs. No more outsourcing to transcription services or assigning routine work to higher-priced resources. Specialized speech recognition technology gives legal teams the ability to reallocate repetitive, lower-value tasks to improve efficiency.



3. Enhance staff mobility. Enable your legal team to complete critical documentation on-the-go—on the way to court, while investigating an accident scene, or when working from home. A cloud-based, professional-grade mobile dictation solution vastly improves mobile documentation productivity.



4. Automate repetitive workflows. Stop reinventing the wheel. Instead, use customized voice commands to insert standard clauses into documents in seconds or create time-saving macros by voice to automate multi-step workflows. Once created, these shortcuts can be shared across your entire legal team to save time and increase uniformity.

Swift advances in artificial intelligence have occurred over the last 10 years, making use of cloud-based speech recognition technology for many legal teams now a standard. This is delivered in the form of enterprise-grade speech recognition software hosted in a cloud infrastructure where security, stability and turnkey simplicity are paramount. Ultimately, adopting this technology means fortifying the bottom line at a time when it has never mattered more.

To learn more about the capabilities of Dragon Legal Anywhere and how it can positively impact your practice management and bottom line, visit www.Nuance.com/DPA/Legal

- 1** Working From Home During the Coronavirus Pandemic: The State of Remote Work, Clutch, April 16, 2020
- 2** Speech-to-text dictation: A 21st-century twist to a traditional law firm tool, ABA Journal, August 23, 2019



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