

meyers | nave



Smart Time Case Study

**One-on-One with Matt Reynolds
Top Technologist at Meyers Nave**

Smart Time Case Study

One-on-One With Matt Reynolds, Top Technologist at Meyers Nave



Matt Reynolds had prior experience with Smart Time, advocating for its adoption at a grassroots level in his position as CIO at his previous employer, Howard Rice. Now the top technologist at Meyers Nave, he was faced with a time entry system that was frozen

with glaring product defects and knew he wanted Smart Time.

What was the key business driver for implementing a new timekeeping system?

With the time entry system we had, we were up against issues of instability, and the product was frozen—so that warranted an opportunity to look at other time entry solutions in the marketplace. I had some fresh insight because I went through the exercise of improving time entry while I was CIO at my former firm.

What made you select Smart Time?

Smart Time was presented to key stakeholders at Meyers Nave as a means to garner interest and excitement, an internal marketing campaign of sorts. Here are the top benefits I presented in order of importance.

1. Saves time. The product definitely reduces the time it takes to record billable time.
2. Increases billable hours. By virtue of the architecture of the system, it's going to give you more data points for billable time. It's also more accurate, because you're getting data pushed to you—you're not pulling data, not looking for it, it comes to you—so you're constructing more accurate billable time for your clients.

3. The fluidity of Smart Time in terms of design. It's easy to learn, so a somewhat technically proficient attorney could learn the system on their own.

4. It's browser agnostic. It's really important for something that's browser-based—it's a much easier system to manage and deploy.

There are some intrinsic features I really like about the core Smart Time product. It has a lot of features that you don't have in a lot of time entry products. It is a "toolbox" type product with numerous tools available to timekeepers based on their personal preference.

One is that it's a great tool for the individual timekeeper, irrespective of their behaviors and habits in entering billable time. If you have a timekeeper that enters their time every day, that works, and if you have a timekeeper who enters time once a month, while not optimal, it will also still work because of the time capture journal reporting.

It's also a tool for Partners (Shareholders). Aside from entering their time, if a partner is looking at their matters, they can look and see and what other timekeepers are billing on those matters and how busy they are. So a partner may say, "I have Ms. Richards on this matter, but she's only billing 10 hours a week, so I may move her over to this matter, where I can split her time or put her on full time."

Additionally, when you have a secretary that's entering the lawyer's time, the lawyer is either providing the secretary a bunch of notes, a series of emails and these sorts of things. With Smart Time, the secretary can actually see exactly what the lawyer sees—all the emails, all the documents they've touched, all the office phone calls, all the phone calls from their mobile wireless device, etc. So the secretary can build the time chit, or at least the shell. And then the lawyer is just reviewing the narrative. So it really streamlines the efficiency of the timekeeper allows attorneys to practice law.

Another hallmark feature are timers. One of the product defects with our prior time entry system was that timers did not work as designed. Timers not functioning translated to billable hours vaporizing. With Smart Time, the timers are rock solid. So, we're capturing more time by virtue of that.

How have your attorneys adapted to the system?

It takes a while, irrespective of the firm, because lawyers don't like change. It's just a fact. We're almost through the bubble, where attorneys are on the other end, where they know it's going to make life easier.

Actually, the biggest coup for Smart Time is the applet called Flick-It. It can be a standalone app, or it's available within Smart Time. It is a single window app for the timekeeper that just wants to get in and get out. Flick-It is growing like wildfire here... it's an extension that they really use. We even installed the Flick-It shortcut on every attorney, secretary and paralegal workstation here.

What are the key benefits of deploying a time capture module?

Well, here's an interesting phenomenon we have here that I didn't predict. At first I had mixed feelings about this, but now I see it as a favorable outcome. When I went into this, I really thought we'd have more timekeepers doing their own time—it's directly the opposite.

We have more secretaries entering time than ever before. Attorneys are saying, "Hey, my secretary can really narrow my time." So now we're finding that the attorneys are modifying how much time they may have worked on a particular task or the narrative, and so they're not spending near as much time as they did in the past constructing a ground-up time chit. The economics of this shift translates to a better bottom-line since timekeepers are working more at their craft versus spending more time on administrative matters.

I knew our existing system was inferior. I was pretty convinced that with the Smart Time data connectors going out to the document management, telephone and email systems, etc., that the lawyers were going to get information back—they'd made a phone call, sent an email, worked on a document, etc.—and so

leaked time would be reduced. With the journal report, they're actually seeing more information and saying, "Oh yeah, I did make that phone call," or "I did talk to that client for 30 minutes." I knew we'd be capturing more time. While a full analysis has not yet been done at the timekeeper level, we do know that with the pilot program, lawyers were spending less time recording billable time improving the bottom-line.

What is the firm's mobile strategy and how does Smart Time fit into the plan?

That was a big part. One of the ongoing discussions at the firm was to come up with an innovative technology subsidy program for the attorneys and I wanted to offer a uniform and innovative solution unique to competitor firms. We're predominantly an iPhone/iPad shop. My thinking was, while I want to be careful about it, I do feel that the iPad makes lawyers more efficient, but it's an added burden for IT. But, if I can have a lawyer on BART or a lawyer at home, doing their time (as opposed to the office) on a device that had time entry that looked the same and felt the same as the time entry product in use at the office, I could make life easier for lawyers, at least in a small way.

About Meyers Nave

As a full-service law firm, Meyers Nave offers comprehensive knowledge and experience in virtually all areas of law impacting public and private entities. Many of our attorneys have worked in public agency law for more than 20 years. As such, we deliver the best of both worlds—the insight of insiders who understand the operation and character of government agencies and businesses in California, and the perspective and objectivity of a third-party legal expert. We can provide legal advice, transactional assistance and litigation representation in the many disciplines encompassed within our firm's 16 practice groups.

Today the firm has over 70 attorneys and practices in eighteen distinct areas of law from six offices strategically located throughout California. Still a leader in California's municipal law arena, Meyers Nave also provides legal advice, transactional assistance and litigation representation to private clients. (www.meyersnave.com)

About Smart WebParts

Smart Time Apps creates software solutions that maximize profits for law, accounting and professional services firms. Our flagship product, Smart Time, is an all-in-one time management platform. Our team of experts specializes in finance, accounting, marketing, process engineering and technology. We utilize best-of-breed technologies, as well as the most advanced tools and production processes. We have built a dedicated team, who offer solutions that are unique in the industry. Smart Time Apps is privately held and is headquartered in Campbell, California. (www.smartwebparts.com)



Smart Time Apps
19148 Old Vineyard Road
Los Gatos, CA 95033
877-776-7505
www.smartwebparts.com