



Digital Speech Processing Reference Story

ESN Solicitors

Introduction

ESN Solicitors is a growing High Street practice based in northern Birmingham. It has a classic mix of corporate, commercial and private client business, including M &A, litigation, commercial property, residential conveyancing, matrimonial and criminal. Prior to its selection of Grundig Business Systems (GBS), it had been looking at moving from analogue to digital dictation for a couple of years; unfortunately, an unsuccessful trial with another supplier delayed the transition and made the firm wary of the technology.

Background

Digital dictation was finally put back on the agenda when managing partner, John Sumner, had GBS reseller and digital dictation specialist Speechwrite recommended to him. Conscious of the growing limitations and problems of his analogue system, John agreed to work with Speechwrite to implement both GBS hardware and software.

Project

Initially, John wanted to trial the recording device, the workflow software and transcription equipment on a one-to-one basis with his secretary. As a heavy dictation user, he felt that six months of rigorous field-testing would enable him to fully assess the usability and functionality of the portable recorders, the flexibility and efficiency of the workflow application, the clarity of playback and ease of transcription and, finally, to gauge the overall performance of the turnkey solution. Depending on his findings, he would then decide whether to extend the roll-out further.

The six month trial went so well that in February of this year, digital dictation was deployed across the 6-strong matrimonial department

for further evaluation. They too adjudged the implementation a success and John then moved to have it installed in the criminal team, with 12-14 users. Further roll-outs are planned in the year ahead.

John's extended testing convinced him that digital dictation, with the right supplier, could be the progressive, benefit-rich solution so often reported in the media. The fact that the fee-earners didn't really have to learn anything new was vital – physically they could dictate as they always had, it's just that now they could also do all the things they'd wanted to do but were prevented by the limitations of analogue eg cataloguing in folders, setting author IDs, inserting timestamps or jump marks, making insertions and annotations, sending updates to a previously submitted dictation and, of course, enjoying perfect playback of their own words.

If anything, the gains for secretaries were even greater, what with the excellent audio quality, the ability to see instantly the priority tasks and to get clear briefs on any particular file via the fee earner's attached instruction.

Critical success factors

So why did the GBS solution work so well? John highlights the following as critical success factors for the project.

- Easy transition to digital through familiarity of recording devices
- Positive adoption of the technology thanks to the range of features and functions designed to simplify recording and transcription
- Immediate process gains from user-friendly software – quicker distribution, better workload management, greater throughput
- Faster creation of complete, accurate dictations through editing and insertion facilities

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- Quicker turnaround of dictations by typists – they have a clear view of what is urgent or in what order dictations should be transcribed
- Fewer queries to fee earners and fewer mistakes in final transcription because of superior sound quality and ability to attach specific instructions to files
- Faster, more reliable delivery of voice files – no more cassettes to drop in or tapes to break
- Greater practice efficiency and less user frustration courtesy of the intuitive, streamlined nature of digital dictation processing

Conclusion

ESN Solicitors has achieved a successful migration from analogue to digital dictation and is currently enjoying increased levels of productivity, quality and user satisfaction. The GBS turnkey solution proposed by Speechwrite has provided both powerful yet easy to use recording devices and a comprehensive but straightforward workflow application. The familiarity and intuitiveness of the system have been instrumental in staff acceptance of the new technology and the continuing benefits will lead to only a wider deployment in the months to come.

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