



Customer Success Story

MAPSYS Helps Franklin County Public Defender Save Time and Money With Customized Case Management and Imaging Solutions

Located in the capital city of Columbus, Ohio, the Franklin County Public Defender Office (FCPD) is one of the largest law firms in the state, employing a staff of more than 170 professional and support personnel that handle between 50,000 and 75,000 cases a year. Across its four business units, the firm works on everything from juvenile and municipal cases to common pleas and appeals.

With such a large and varied case load that grows at an average rate of two to three percent a year, it stands to reason that the FCPD would need effective case management and imaging technology to help it manage the volume. However, according to MIS Director James Fain, the solutions the firm had relied upon for years were becoming too inflexible, inefficient and costly to support.

"Our case management and imaging solutions were custom-built for us around ten years ago, and while they served their purposes for a while, our requirements had begun to outstrip their capabilities," says Fain. "As a government agency, funding is always tight, but if we could show the potential for cost reductions and efficiency gains, we'd be able to justify the need for new solutions. It was with this in mind that we decided to engage with MAPSYS."

With a reputation for completing other successful projects within the county, MAPSYS was the first choice for the firm, and the organizations quickly laid out a technology roadmap that had a rebuilt case management solution as the first stop.

The Gap Between "What We Have" and "What We Need"

In order to ensure that the new case management solution would effectively meet the needs of the FCPD's diverse group of legal professionals, MAPSYS began the project by interviewing users about the old system—finding out what they liked, what didn't work and what features they felt were missing. Throughout this process, a few common themes emerged.

For starters, the previous solution was client-based, so any updates and customization had to be performed on an individual basis, which was inefficient and costly from a support perspective. What's more, the organization that designed the solution saw a lot of turnover with its employees during that time. As Fain says, "It was like reinventing the wheel with people who didn't know our business every time we had an issue or needed a bug fixed."

In addition to the efficiency and support issues, the previous case management system integrated poorly with other applications, so users would have to search around, keep multiple windows open and click back and forth to get the information they needed. Finally, the solution's interface was drastically out of date when compared to the more user-friendly, Web-like applications people use today.

With the results of this gap analysis, MAPSYS was able to design, build and implement a modern case management system for the FCPD that not only increases efficiencies and reduces support costs, but also includes a browser-like interface that both new and old employees can navigate with ease. What's more, the solution boasts unified administration features on the backend, so updates can be applied system-wide, even as individual business units (e.g., Municipal, Common Pleas, etc.) customize screens according to what information is most important to them.

Key Highlights

Industry

Legal/Government

Challenge

Work with a trusted technology advisor to implement low-cost, customized legal solutions

Solution

MAPSYS custom-designed case management and imaging solutions

Benefits

- Reduced solution maintenance costs
- Simplified administration with unified backend management
- Improved ease-of-use and integration between solutions
- Enhanced interface to provide Web-like experience
- Doubled data entry throughput without adding headcount
- Reduced reliance on paper and printouts

The Same Set of Issues and Costs

According to Fain, after the success of the case management solution implementation, FCPD felt that MAPSYS would be the right partner to address the challenges the firm had been having with its imaging solution.

"We had an out-of-the-box imaging solution from the organization that implemented our old case management system, so it came with the same set of support issues and escalating maintenance costs," says Fain. "What we needed was an application that was cheaper, more flexible, easier to use and customized according to our needs. Thankfully, MAPSYS was able to come through again."

From a functionality perspective, one of the primary issues FCPD had with the previous imaging solution was that it displayed every tool and function for every user, which made the application cumbersome and difficult to navigate. In contrast, the MAPSYS imaging solution can be customized according to individual user needs, creating a clean, browser-based interface that is easy to use.

What's more, the MAPSYS imaging solution can capture audio and video files, in addition to scanned paper and electronic documents, enabling the firm's lawyers to access all important case materials in one location. The solution also integrates seamlessly with the MAPSYS case management solution and other FCPD applications.

Finding the Best Way Forward

Since implementing the MAPSYS case management and imaging solutions, FCPD has experienced a number of significant benefits, not the least of which revolve around cost—namely, reduced maintenance fees and a predictable cost structure for the future. In addition to these "hard" savings, the firm is seeing "soft cost" benefits in the form of enhanced efficiencies and a reduced reliance on paper documents.

For example, thanks to the unified nature of the MAPSYS case management solution, data entry workers have been able to eliminate duplicate work, essentially doubling their throughput without any additional headcount. According to Fain, the benefits of this productivity are two-fold: "It enables us to stay on top of a case load that increases every year, and it affords the opportunity to shift resources that open up toward more strategic initiatives," he says.

Additionally, with the new MAPSYS imaging solution and its ability to incorporate multiple file formats from disk, CDs and other media, the firm's lawyers no longer have to print out thousands of document pages during a case's discovery phase. Now they can easily find just the information they need and print out only what is required for the case, saving them time and the firm money.

Reflecting on the success of these solutions, Fain believes that know-how, flexibility and a commitment to service are the factors that make MAPSYS the right fit for FCPD. "They were here, day in and day out, working with us to find the best way forward—and instead of us having to change our way of doing things to accommodate the technology, they designed the applications expressly to work within our business rules," concludes Fain. "They just 'get' how we do business, and we're looking forward to additional projects with them in the future."

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