

Stewart Title Guaranty Company

Overview

Location: Houston, TX

Industry: Surety and Title Insurance

Customer Profile:

Stewart Title Guaranty Company is a Stewart company, part of the Stewart Information Services Corporation (NYSE:STC) family of companies, based in Houston, Texas. Stewart is a technology-driven, strategically competitive real estate information and transaction management provider. Stewart Title Guaranty Company provides title insurance, escrow and closing, and related services through more than 9,500 issuing locations in the United States and international markets.

Stewart Title Guaranty Company (STGC) applied CounselLink™ to modernize and manage the process of handling Stewart Legal Services' growing volume of billings, maintain good relationships with outside counsel, and save the company time and money.

The Challenge: Streamline an Outdated Process and Reduce Errors

Denise Carraux, vice president of Legal Automation and Process Management for Stewart Legal Services, leads a team responsible for managing invoices for Stewart's growing Legal Services group and, principally, eliminating a labor-intensive paper process that was prone to errors and required numerous revisions to billings. Carraux manages Stewart Legal Services' automation systems, including matter management, policy loss systems, and accounting system integration.

"We were looking to implement an e-billing system, but there were concerns about the cost and whether we could get the level of security we needed," she said.

At the time, Stewart Legal Services' invoice volume was rapidly increasing and a team was processing some 1,500 invoices per month – essentially by hand.

"Before CounselLink, we had a very cumbersome paper process that was inefficient and resulted in avoidable errors," Carraux said. "A document without proper approvals would be rerouted, sometimes producing duplicate copies. Occasionally, a firm would be double paid, so there were always errors to clean up."

While half of the invoices Stewart Legal Services processes are electronic, the remainder are available only in hard copy, as the company does busi-

“CounselLink helps us control costs by catching more billing errors such as double-billing or incorrect charges – and makes it easier for our people to review the invoices”

Denise Carraux, Vice President, Legal Automation and Process Management, Stewart Legal Services

ness with small law offices that may not have the technology to send electronic invoices.

“We had to find a way of getting 100 percent capture of invoices – in any format,” she said. This was necessary to avoid creating process difficulties for the company’s legal vendors. “It had to be easy for them. It was a real challenge, we thought,” Carraux said.

The Solution: CounselLink Flexibility, Security, Compliance

The team researched various solutions before choosing CounselLink. The company already enjoyed a “great relationship” with LexisNexis and, as a result, Carraux and her team checked with other users of CounselLink to get some first-hand reviews of the solution before making their final selection. Armed with good reviews, the decision was made to go with CounselLink. Importantly, the CounselLink Web-based application, backed by excellent online security for Stewart’s vendor law firms and affordability as an enterprise solution, was able to address and resolve internal questions.

In addition, the CounselLink solution offered a number of key benefits that helped Stewart Title in their decision, including:

- **Greater control.** CounselLink allows Stewart to capture and store all invoice entries from paper or any other type of source into a common electronic format. “We really liked that LexisNexis offered a service to process paper and transform the information into an electronic format. We just didn’t see the value of having a system that couldn’t capture everything,” said Carraux.
- **Improved efficiency.** CounselLink streamlines the invoice review, approval, and payment procedures by automating the entire process. The SmartReview® technology reads, categorizes, and reviews the details of every invoice charge and automatically adjusts charges that are outside of Stewart’s billing guidelines that have been customized as part of the service. “CounselLink helps us control costs by catching more billing errors such as double-billing or incorrect charges – and makes it easier for our people to review the invoices,” said Carraux. Automated workflows move invoices to the appropriate reviewers to ensure that the right approvals are received.

“Before CounselLink, we had a very cumbersome paper process that was inefficient and resulted in avoidable errors ...when we called others who had implemented CounselLink, we got great reports on the results. I’m happy to say the reports were right.”

Denise Carraux, Vice President, Legal Automation and Process Management, Stewart Legal Services

- **Reduced risk and managed compliance.** By consolidating the billing data into one highly secure, Web-based system, Stewart is able to more easily track and report on their legal operations and costs for internal and external auditing.
- **LexisNexis® support.** With the help of CounselLink experts, Stewart was able to implement and introduce its new system internally to the Stewart Legal Services team and to their diverse outside counsel community in a short period of time.

“The LexisNexis implementation team was great. They listened to us and we worked together to work out any logistical issues.” As a result, “the new system worked extremely well from day one,” Carraux said.

The Benefits: Increased efficiency and cost savings

In place for approximately one year, the CounselLink service is only just beginning to reveal its full potential. According to Carraux, the system is paying for itself in the cost savings. But it is the efficiency increases where the effects are most apparent.

She indicated that the previous system was “very manpower intensive...what used to take an inordinate amount of team time is now manageable,” Carraux said.

The impact of CounselLink on invoice and payment processing is especially dramatic at the year-end financial close of the company. At the end of the year, her staff may work “60-hour weeks to close out the influx of invoices received,” Carraux said, but – thanks to CounselLink – “we are keeping current with our file processing and maintenance.”

On the provider side, she said some of their law firms were initially wary of having to switch to a Web-based system, but once they understood the simple process and the experience, “they are very happy. They get paid faster; things aren’t getting lost or misrouted, or miscoded. They’re pleased with the new system.”

At the corporate level, Carraux and her Information Technology (IT) team have developed a winning relationship with LexisNexis. By integrating CounselLink with their existing systems, information flows seamlessly from one to another, eliminating the need to rekey information and reducing the possibilities of errors.

“The CounselLink team was professional and supportive from start to finish,” Carraux said. “It’s been a good experience. We already had a great relationship with LexisNexis, and when we called others who had implemented CounselLink, we got great reports on the results. I’m happy to say the reports were right.”

About LexisNexis

LexisNexis® (www.lexisnexis.com) is a leading provider of information and services solutions, including its flagship Web-based Lexis® and Nexis® research services, to a wide range of professionals in the legal, risk management, corporate, government, law enforcement, accounting and academic markets. A member of Reed Elsevier [NYSE: ENL; NYSE: RUK] (www.reedelsevier.com), the company does business in 100 countries with 13,000 employees worldwide.

For More Information

Visit corporate.lexisnexis.com/counselink

LexisNexis and the Knowledge Burst logo are registered trademarks of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., used under license. CounselLink is a trademark and SmartReview is a registered trademark of LexisNexis Examen Inc. Other products or services may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.
© 2008 LexisNexis, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. NXC01878-0 0208