



INTELLIGENT OFFICE

How Legal Professionals Use Virtual Office Services

TO GET A LEG UP



Law firms (large and small) and solo legal practitioners alike can use virtual office services and spaces to run their entire legal operations or as a supplement to a home office or traditional brick-and-mortar offices. Virtual office services can be particularly useful during trial preparation, which can last from several weeks to many months, and when attorneys and other legal support staff will be fully immersed in the process.

Benefits to utilizing virtual office services during trial preparation include the ability to be closer to clients and cases, added administrative support, streamlining the discovery process, professional and spacious conference rooms for depositions, and abundant space to collect and review discovery and other documents that accumulate during trial preparation.

Virtual Offices Help Attorneys go to Their Clients, and to Their Cases

Client meetings are often a necessity, but as attorneys become increasingly mobile, they may not be in the same geographic area as their clientele. For example, if a legal professional typically works from a more suburban location, but they have a case coming to trial in the neighboring city center, it might make sense to utilize conference space in the city. Documents can be securely stored there, eliminating the need to tote boxes of reference materials back and forth, and the attorney is able to be closer and more readily available to his or her client, as well as the court.

Indiana bankruptcy attorney Brad Woolley is one example of a legal professional who has used virtual office services to bring him closer to his clients. When the economy surrounding bankruptcy filings changed, Woolley began utilizing a virtual office space near the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in West Lafayette, Indiana. The change brought him closer to clients, and even helped him expand his business.

Virtual law office solutions are also beneficial for firms who bring attorneys from around the country together to work on a single case. Many virtual office companies often have physical locations in a number of areas across the United States and Canada, an extremely helpful tool for lawyers preparing for trial away from their home bases. The team can come together at a virtual office in a new location and conduct mock trials in a professional setting, which certainly beats practicing in a hotel room. Audio and video conferencing equipment is also available to allow staff throughout the firm to participate and help with preparation.

Get Extra Support with Virtual Office Services

During the weeks and months leading to trial, every legal professional on the team is essential, and handling the administrative load can be cumbersome, to say the least. Virtual office services, like phone answering, can free up paralegals and legal secretaries to help with the case at hand. The support staff in a virtual office can also help coordinate busy schedules, including scheduling depositions amongst all parties.

Attorney Leo Legere completely trusts his virtual office staff to pre-screen client phone calls, emphasizing that “Intelligent Office is very good about finding us, even if we’re in court.” It’s vital that support staff are able to judge when a matter is urgent, and Legere has been pleased with how client phone calls are handled. “We have absolutely reduced the amount of clients that we lose through the use of Intelligent Office.”

Virtual law offices with skilled staff can even assist with the inevitable, time-consuming tasks that arise during trial preparations. These seemingly small tasks can suck up time that’s better spent working on the case. Discovery documents can be shipped to a virtual office, where copies and a list of everything received can be quickly made. After the trial, a virtual assistant can even pack up the originals and ensure that they’re returned to their owners. The only caveat is that lawyers are held to a higher degree of responsibility for supervising staff, and they must ensure that confidential client information is not revealed without consent or other exception. The New York City Bar even lays these rules out in a Formal Opinion dissecting the ethics regarding the use of virtual offices.

Streamline the Discovery Process by Utilizing Outside Office Space

Even with the proliferation of e-discovery in most states, evidence often still comes in the form of books, records, and other documents. Gathering evidence to present at trial is a lengthy process for any legal professional, and it's easy to become overwhelmed by the sheer amount of paperwork that interrogatories, requests for production of documents, requests for admissions, depositions, and subpoenas can generate. If a legal office doesn't have the extra space for the amount of evidence that comes through its doors, it's all too easy for documents to become mixed-up and misplaced.

Take Depositions at a Virtual Office

When it's time for depositions, virtual office spaces can be the perfect gathering place for any practicing attorney, whether they come from a large firm or practice solo. Conference rooms are fully flexible – attorneys only have to rent what they need. Taking depositions at a virtual office has a variety of perks, from added space to added amenities to a more convenient location for the despondent or other parties. For firms without spacious meeting rooms (or, for firms with fully booked meeting rooms) the ability to rent space ensures that attorneys for each side can be present, along with the court reporter and the deponent. Audio and video equipment are also available at many conference rooms in virtual offices.

Hospitality during this often-uncomfortable phase of trial preparation isn't thrown to the sidelines, either. Visitors will be greeted, shown to the conference room, and can even be provided with refreshments.

Solo practitioner Patrick O'Reilly appreciates the location and comfort of his virtual office, emphasizing "It's a great place to meet clients." The central location of the building also allows clients to easily reach him from most locations within the Metro Detroit area.



Tremendous Cost Savings

Many legal professionals don't spend the majority of their time actively engaged in trial preparation, so it often doesn't make fiscal sense to have extra support staff and office space available at all times. Utilizing virtual law office solutions can offer remarkable cost savings, and attorneys only need to pay for what they use.

The American Bar Association has even asked attorneys to weigh in on the pros and cons of using virtual offices. Minnesota-based attorney Jayne Sykora loves how her virtual office provider has several locations throughout her metropolitan area, but the cost savings were what initially attracted her and her partner to the service.

Using Virtual Offices for Your Law Firm

Attorneys who take advantage of virtual office solutions and services can save time and money while getting ready for trial. From administrative help, to securing space for taking depositions and scouring through documents, virtual offices offer solutions to fit every need.



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of Intelligent Office's many services.**

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