

SUCCESS STORY

Northern U.S. Law Firm Optimizes Billing Process to Reduce Write-Downs with Aderant BillBlast



Background

Like most firms with hundreds of lawyers on staff, this national civil litigation firm regularly processes a high volume of eBills. While ensuring compliance with client-provided billing guidelines is a priority, the variances in requests from client to client pose a challenge for lawyers tasked with recalling each relevant set of guidelines. The firm needed an eBilling solution that could identify patterns within billing rejections and enable them to expand the rules flagged at the point of time entry, enforcing attorney compliance; Aderant's BillBlast "fit the bill."

Actionable Analytics

When selecting BillBlast as their legal eBilling software, the firm's director of billing compliance was impressed by the "endless usability" of BillBlast data. As a former insurance auditor, the director had worked closely with eBill vendor platforms to build out the rules applied to law firm invoices. While most do not have the boundless resources necessary to manually collect and review billing data to improve their internal processes, BillBlast automatically compiles up-to-date deduction analytics to uncover compliance issues which firms can then use to implement rules to address. The director of billing compliance remarked,

"Training for our timekeepers is great, but it's not going to enforce their adherence to client requirements. BillBlast equips us with the information needed to create the rules within our firm's financial system, Aderant Expert."

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Billing errors and appeals dramatically impacted collections realization, evident in over-extended timelines and delayed payments. The director continued,

“Before BillBlast, we were letting money bleed out the door. By stopping the non-compliant time entry from ever occurring, we not only collect the money faster, but we save on the staffing for appeals and collections while removing attorney interruptions required to respond to those non-compliant entries, allowing them to focus on billable tasks.”

Take for example the impact of just one reduction on the firm’s billed-to-paid timeline:

- A lawyer records time in February, but it is not billed in the firm’s financial system until April because of the client’s rules on billing frequency.
- The firm must then resolve submission errors before sending an invoice to the client in May.
- In June, an eBill vendor flags time for reduction, requiring an appeal from the firm.
- The firm submits an appeal in July.
- In August, the eBill vendor approves the firm’s appeal for payment.
- The firm finally receives payment in October.

This lengthened timeline for revenue recognition, six months in this instance, was not uncommon before implementing BillBlast.

With BillBlast, the firm was able to conduct a review of invoices to find “quick-hits”, or rejections caused by issues commonplace across a wide range of clients. For example, the billing compliance director quickly realized that many invoices were reduced due to lack of detail in travel and attendance time entries. Incorporating a time entry rule to flag requirements for details, such as miles traveled and destination, allowed the firm to prevent infractions from ever occurring. Knowing that their clients are regularly analyzing this data to compare the firm’s ability to comply with the guidelines to the other outside counsel firms servicing their legal work, the director remarked,

“BillBlast mimics what the clients have in place with their eBill vendor solutions. The majority of client-required platforms do not make this information available to firms; for the few that do, it is something they offer at a fee. BillBlast gives you the same visibility and metrics across all platforms and all clients, enables you to review the same data reports that your clients are looking at, and levels the playing field.”

Better with BillBlast

Looking to the future, the firm plans to begin a roll-out of client-specific rules within Expert Time, developed using an understanding informed by BillBlast data of how clients’ auditors interpret their guidelines. By looking at the categories of deductions along with line-item entries, they will be able to decide what rules are needed and whether there is an across-the-board, standard set or if multiple types of rules are necessary for each client. With BillBlast, the firm is prepared to adjust as client supplied billing guidelines become more complex, during the Covid pandemic and beyond.

In her concluding thoughts on the value that BillBlast provides, the billing compliance director added,

“My motto now is, ‘Don’t take my BillBlast data away from me!’ I use it daily. It’s data that, for me, is invaluable, because I’m using it to create the rules that will bring us to the next level in terms of client satisfaction.”

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Interested in exploring how BillBlast can transform your firm’s billing process? Contact Aderant today to discuss how BillBlast can manage all your eBilling needs.

