



## CASE STUDY

# Improving Timekeeping Habits:

How Butzel Long made lawyer time entry three times faster, while reducing eBilling rejections by 50%

## Challenges

When Steve Ratliff became the Chief Information Officer at Butzel Long, he noticed the firm needed improvements to their timekeeping practices. With more than 150 lawyers across six offices, Ratliff recognized the potential efficiency and monetary gains that could be made by implementing a consistent timekeeping and compliance initiative to address myriad areas for improvement:

**TIME ENTRY:** The solution on their legacy system had no mobile time entry tool. As mobility has become a necessary capability, lawyers were having to wait days, and sometimes more than a week, until they were back at their desks to record their time. Without contemporaneous time entry, minutes and hours inevitably would get lost in the shuffle, costing the firm potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue annually.

**TIME ENTRY POLICY:** Like many larger firms with multiple offices and a multi-generational work force, having a consistent policy was difficult. Many lawyers were still having to collaborate with their secretary at the end of the week to try and reconstruct their time. Without a single consistent policy in place, there was very little visibility for firm management to analyse and take steps to mitigate or improve processes and behaviors.

**OCG AND BILLING COMPLIANCE:** With eBilling on the rise everywhere, the manual processes to validate compliance with client guidelines was becoming too cumbersome. Often only one billing team member would be familiar with a specific client's guidelines, which led to invoices, with seemingly innocuous errors, getting rejected, increasing the chances of write-downs and write-offs daily.

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## Solution

Butzel Long chose to implement the iTimekeep suite which included OCG Live and Thrive, both of which were rolled out in the successive months.

The implementation of iTimekeep was completed in a matter of hours and required minimal training. Another aspect that made iTimekeep attractive was the real-time integration with their time and billing system, meaning Butzel Long didn't have to choose an old versus new time entry platform and flip a switch. Instead, they were able to immediately get new users up to speed at their convenience. "Time entry continued without a hitch," said Ratliff. "With such an easy rollout of iTimekeep, it was one less component to worry about for our IT team."

After implementing iTimekeep and all the lawyers were using it, Butzel Long then completed a rollout of OCG Live to improve compliance with outside counsel guidelines at the point of time entry. Putting this aspect of compliance earlier in the process means the timekeeper would get an immediate alert of non-compliant entry, instead of finding out at the end of the day, the week or even the month. More compliant time entry has a positive effect downstream when it comes time for month-end billing and eBilling submission.

The final phase was adding Thrive to establish and incorporate a timekeeping policy for the firm. With the goal of creating a culture of compliance, Ratliff would be able to use the Thrive dashboard to examine individual and group behaviors to uncover areas for improvement both upstream and downstream in the time and billing process.

## Business Impact

Butzel Long strives to price their work competitively, deliver optimal results for their clients, and achieve healthy bottom-line results. By making time entry simple and compliant with client guidelines, iTimekeep has allowed the firm to maintain the integrity of an hour worked, which helps them pass the true value on to their clients. Since implementing the iTimekeep suite, Butzel Long has seen improvement in multiple areas:

### IMPROVED TIMEKEEPING:

- **Time entry at the firm is 3x faster than before**
- Increased volume of contemporaneous time entry among lawyers
- Improved timecard granularity

### IMPROVED OCG/BILLING COMPLIANCE:

- Changed the behavior at the point of time entry, resulting in fewer rejections
- **Reduced eBilling rejections by 50%**

### IMPROVED COMPLIANCE WITH TIME ENTRY POLICY:

- Lawyers now entering their own time
- Full visibility into time entry for reporting and firm management

## In Their Words

"The dashboard and reporting capability give us visibility into our time entry throughout the month, and the OCG Live component increases the transparency of billing guidelines, allowing our timekeepers to work and bill more in line with our clients' expectations."

— Steve Ratliff, Chief Information Officer

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