5 Tips for More Effective Family Law Firm Time and Expense Tracking

Many family law firms rely on an array of ineffective methods to keep track of time and expense entries. From crumpled (and often lost) receipts intended to be stuffed into a client folder to excel spreadsheets that get updated sporadically at best, many time and expense tracking methods ultimately waste more time and money than they actually save.

Fortunately, modern time and expense tracking software can make these struggles a thing of the past. Digital time and expense tracking holds the potential to revolutionize the way your law firm does business.

But if it's not used as intended, even industry-leading software can't function at its best. That's why we're sharing our top 5 tips for better time and expense tracking at your family law firm.

Best practices for time and expense tracking within family law firms

These five tips can help your firm more accurately track its time and expenses while also freeing up hours for billable work.

1. Use time tracking software with daily tasks in mind
2. Set long and short-term goals for using your time & expense tracking software
3. Make time entries and expense entries immediately
4. Use your family law firm's time and expense tracking software consistently
5. Take advantage of built-in time and expense reporting features

1. Use time tracking software with daily and long-term tasks in mind

The last thing that busy attorneys want to do at the end of a packed day is to make a to-do list. After all, contemplating just how much more work you have to accomplish tomorrow *seems* stressful. But while it may feel counterintuitive, creating a daily to-do list can actually reduce attorneys' stress.

Typically, key dates and tasks live within an array of handwritten notes, spreadsheets, calendar entries, and emails. Relying on several different methods to track which tasks have and haven't been completed is a recipe for disaster. Consolidating important information into a single to-do list reduces the likelihood that attorneys will forget important tasks. [Text Wrapping Break][Text Wrapping Break]When all tasks are combined into a straightforward, accessible-from-anywhere list, it becomes easier for busy attorneys to prioritize at a glance which tasks are most urgent and which tasks can probably be completed later on. [Text Wrapping Break][Text Wrapping Break]In addition, creating a to-do list the day before grants attorneys' the opportunity to block out their time, which allows them to focus more deeply on the matter at hand. This approach is much more productive than bouncing back and forth between tasks.

2. Set long and short-term goals for using your time & expense tracking software

Family law firm time and [expense tracking software](#) offers a wide range of benefits. It's easier to determine how your team should utilize your software tools once you decide which of these benefits will deliver the greatest impacts.

Below are just a few of the advantages your family law firm can gain by leveraging the right time and expense tracking software:

- More accurate expense tracking
- More accurate invoicing/billing
- Profitable decision-making
- Better organization of expense entries
- Better law firm budgeting
- More productive time management

Whether you strive to achieve all or only a few of these goals, knowing what to aim for helps you to understand which time and expense tracking

software features would be most useful for your team to implement. After all, it's a waste to spend time and money on features that aren't driving your firm toward its goals.

Teach your legal staff how to enter expense and time entries most effectively

The busy attorneys at your family law firm are significantly less likely to leverage time and expense tracking software if they don't know *why* it's important. They're also less likely to implement time and expense tracking best practices if they don't know *how* to use it. [Text Wrapping Break][Text Wrapping Break]That's why it's crucial to train every attorney and staff member at your family law firm in the best practices for time and expense tracking. If the software you're using offers [free training and support](#), you should also make sure that your whole team is getting hands-on training.

3. Make time and expense entries immediately

Creating time and expense entries right away significantly improves both billing accuracy and law firm profitability.

Attorneys may feel that entering time and expenses spent on client matters is a distraction from more "important" work, but doing so consistently increases law firm profitability. Waiting a day, or even a week, to make expense entries increases the likelihood that receipts will be lost. Similarly, when attorneys neglect to use time tracking software until all billable hours for a client matter are completed, it's more likely that invoices will be less detailed and less accurate.

4. Use your family law firm's time and expense tracking software consistently

You should be using your [time tracking software](#) to record every minute your team works, including non-billable hours. It's crucial for family law firms to be aware of exactly how much time staff spends on non-billable tasks. Maintaining time entries for non-billable hours becomes especially important for firms that offer family law services at a flat-rate fee structure.

Tracking where attorneys spend the most time provides valuable insight as to whether it's necessary to increase your rates due to a mismatch in duties

and profits. In addition, this data demonstrates the biggest time drains for your firm and the bottlenecks slowing down your workflows. In turn, you're granted an opportunity to eliminate distractions and ineffective firm policies.

Make expense entries for all expenses.

Don't make the costly mistake of tracking *only* the expenses that your family law firm incurs in relation to client matters. Make expense entries for costs that are *not* directly related to client matters, as well. This information may improve law firm profitability by demonstrating exactly how much money your family law firm requires to cover your overhead costs and still turn a profit. [Text Wrapping Break][Text Wrapping Break]In addition, accurate expense data empowers you to determine which types of cases are bringing in the most money—and which cases aren't profitable.

5. Take advantage of built-in time and expense reporting features

Running regular [time and expense reports](#) eliminates blind spots in your law firm budgeting strategy. Using a time tracking software that allows you to create phases and tasks for your matters allows you to detect exactly which parts of the client lifecycle require the most resources to maintain.

 For example, onboarding new clients could be taking more time than you realize! Similarly, if you're aware that filing costs are increasing, you can make a decision to increase your flat-fee rates and explain this change confidently to your clients. You can only make these types of decisions for your family law firm if you're knowledgeable about where your time and money are currently going.

 This is the secret to offering profitable flat-rate fees while maintaining law firm profitability.

TimeSolv makes it easy to implement time tracking and expense tracking best practices—no matter what size your family law firm is

TimeSolv allows your family law firm to maintain all of the time and expense tracking best practices outlined above within one secure, convenient

platform. With over 20 years of experience helping legal practices improve their time tracking and billing, TimeSolv is trusted by thousands of law firms, including family law firms just like yours.

 To learn more about how TimeSolv can help improve your family law firm's operations, [schedule a demo](#) with a product expert today.