Take the Hassle Out of Collecting Fees

There are essentially three phases to collecting fees as an attorney. The first is actually completing the work your client hired you to perform. This may entail negotiating agreements, filing documents or appearing in court. The second is billing the client. This process requires an accurate and complete accounting of work done and time spent on the case. The third phase is the difference between eating and starving. If you are unable to collect your fees from your clients, you essentially gave away your time, energy, and even your finances for free.

Attorneys have numerous stories about clients who did not pay their bills. These situations can quickly become contentious, especially if the attorney chooses to use traditional collection strategies against the client. Unfortunately, these methods are often unsuccessful, though they require a substantial amount of time and energy to employ. Additionally, they place an additional stain on the relationship between the attorney and client, which prevents repeat business and may result in poor reviews to other potential clients.

The best way to collect client billing is to take a proactive, not reactive, approach. Don't wait until the problem arises to take action. Instead, implement a billing system that continuously promotes payment and makes the process easy for the client to complete.

A successful billing system includes several phases:

- **Client Intake** – Your initial client meeting should include more than just a conversation about the case. This is also an opportunity for you to communicate your expectations of the client, including your fees and payment expectations. Clearly outline how and when your billing payments are collected. In a firm setting, create a checklist for all associates to follow during the first meeting. This ensures that every

client is consistently receiving the same information regarding payment of fees.
- **Showing Value** – Consistency is also important when communicating with clients about progress on their cases. A monthly billing lets the client know that work is being completed, which fosters a sense of confidence and security. Happy clients make paying clients. To give the most value, drop the generic billing entries and use detailed task information. This may sound time consuming, but TimeSolv streamlines this process to make it virtually effortless.
- **Make It Easy** – Gone are the days of writing a check and placing it in the mail. Your clients also don't have the time or desire to drop funds off at your office. This is an automated world and without the ability to process online payments, you are missing invaluable opportunities to collect your payments quickly and efficiently. The latest feature from TimeSolv enables your customers to make payments from anywhere, with just a few clicks of the mouse.
- **A Collection Policy** – Inevitably, there will be a client who presents a collection challenge. Put a standardized collection policy in place for easy and quick implementation. Communicate this policy to the client during the initial intake meeting; so there are no surprises should collection become necessary. Once an account becomes 30 days past due, begin the process. Don't hesitate because the longer you wait, the less likely you are to receive the compensation you earned.

TimeSolv is an invaluable tool in the timely collection of your hard-earned fees. Learn more about the online payment portal and try out TimeSolv free for 30 days to see how we can help you better serve your clients, while collecting faster payments.