

Legal Tips: Top 6 billing challenges solo law firms can easily solve with one super easy tip

Is your legal billing system leaving you more frustrated than profitable? You aren't alone. Lawyers list billing issues among their biggest challenges to running successful law firms. Below are six of the top billing headaches faced by solo law firms, followed by one super easy tip to address them all.

1. Inefficient Time Tracking

Before you can even get to the invoicing process, you must first track the time you spend working on tasks and matters. Without the proper tools in place, this seemingly simple task can become difficult, cumbersome, and just altogether dreadful.

It's no secret that, even in this age of ample technology, many solo practitioners still choose pen and paper as their chosen method of time tracking. They may keep a notebook with them to record times, or even jot down time spent on the corners of legal pads, receipts, or whatever piece of paper happens to be within arm's length. These habits lead to lost records and inaccurate timekeeping.

Even for attorneys who have ventured into the electronic time tracking realm, they are likely using outdated systems that require bulky servers or internet connections to record times. These systems are inconvenient and do not meet the mobile needs of today's modern law firm.

2. Invoice Accuracy

Inaccurate invoicing leads to numerous problems. For one, you can lose the confidence of your clients. They may question whether these inaccuracies are genuine mistakes or acts of dishonesty. Your clients may also begin to

question your legal abilities. After all, if you cannot create accurate billing statements, how can you adequately address a complex legal matter.

When your firm creates an invoice and asks a client to pay it, at the very least it should be accurate. Clients trust you to correctly account for hours dedicated to their cases. Inflated bills call your integrity into question, while undercharging undercuts your profitability. Billing inaccuracies not only affect your law firm's bottom line but they also negatively affect the attorney/client relationship.

3. Lack of Billing Expertise

A solo practitioner has way too much on his or her mind to be an expert at everything, but your law firm invoicing is definitely something you want to handle with some level of expertise. Unfortunately, tackling the major learning curve of invoicing can be extremely time-consuming, leaving plenty of opportunity for billing mistakes and unpaid invoices.

Even if you have the budget to hire a billing professional, you risk over-relying on a single person to handle the invoicing for your law practice. What happens if that individual is out sick or leaves the firm all together? If anyone is going to be critical to your firm's billing process, it should be you as a solo practitioner, so you need a billing system that you can become an expert in handling.

4. Nonpayment

The most frustrating part of the billing process comes when you do not get paid. You've done the work and mailed an invoice, but no payment comes in the mail. You might expect that a client would not want to stiff an attorney on a bill, but it's a reality that many lawyers deal with on a monthly basis.

There are numerous reasons why clients fail to pay their bills, but there are also numerous steps you can take to promote the timely payment of your invoices. For example, online payment options increase the likelihood of on-time payments.

5. Reporting Options

Being a solo practitioner doesn't mean that you don't want your practice to grow – and growth requires looking at where you are now and planning for

where you want to go. Unfortunately, most legal billing options lack the capacity for advanced reporting options.

I'm talking about more than a simple payment received statement. Truly effective reporting needs to measure various metrics and data, so you can get a complete view of your firm's overall performance.

6. Innovative Technology

It can be difficult to keep up with larger firms, but innovative technologies can go a long way in helping you do so. With the right legal billing system, you can create customized bills that present your practice in a professional and impressive light. Technologies that promote client communications and provide innovative payment options can also keep your law firm current and in sync with client expectations.

The super easy tip

So, as a solo law firm, how can your business overcome all of these legal billing challenges without breaking the budget or overreaching your staff capabilities? With one very simple step. Get [TimeSolv](#) legal time tracking and billing software for your legal practice. This web-based solution meets all of your billing needs, while also addressing the challenges that keep you up at night. Here's how:

- Time tracking – TimeSolv's time tracking capabilities include a mobile and desktop option, so you can quickly and accurately track time spent on client matters from virtually anywhere in the world.
- Invoice Accuracy – You can easily create invoices directly from your tracked time records to promote accuracy with every single billing statement.
- Billing Expertise – There is no steep learning curve with TimeSolv. It is easy to learn and comes with top-notch customer service, so you and any staff member can quickly learn how to use the software effectively and efficiently.
- Payment Options – An electronic payment option makes bill paying easy and convenient for your clients to promote faster payments.

- Reporting – TimeSolv offers over 30 reports. Just choose the parameters and let the software create the report for you.
 - Innovative Technology – The folks at TimeSolv pride themselves on using the most up-to-date and innovative technology. With customized invoices and a client portal, your clients will view your practice as modern and advanced.
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About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, Personal Touch Edits, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.