

Why your firm needs a client portal

Lawyers are constantly looking for ways to improve client relations and streamline the payment collection process. A client portal assists with both needs by providing a direct line of communication with your clients, while also simplifying the invoicing and payment collection process. With this electronic gateway, an internet connection is all that's necessary for clients to access their personal information and pay invoices. It's a tool that your law office needs and here are some reasons why.

Viewing and Paying Invoices

A [study](#) by ACI Worldwide asserts that Americans pay more than half of their bills online. The reasons are not surprising. Online bill payment is easier, faster, and much more convenient than pulling out a check book and taking the time to visit the mailbox or a place of business. According to the study, bills paid by checks declined 20 percent between 2010 and 2016. During this same period, the number of bills paid via ACH increased by 10 percent, while credit card bill payments doubled. These numbers demonstrate a consistently growing trend in the way that businesses receive payments, but they also represent an expectation that may be held by many of your clients. The average customer, especially those under 50-years-old, have become accustomed to paying bills online. Doesn't it make sense that they would want this same easy and convenient access when doing business with a lawyer? It's an expectation that law firms will have to meet, and a client portal makes that possible.

More than 70% of all online bill payments are [reportedly](#) made on a biller's website, where customers can quickly pay their debts with minimal effort. With the right legal billing service, you can also provide your clients with this level of convenience. TimeSolv's time tracking and legal billing system includes a client portal, which allows your clients to sign in and view their

personalized invoices, payment histories, trust balances, and details of work in progress. They can also easily pay their invoices or replenish trust account balances right through the portal, with no need to come into the office or even make a phone call.

[TimeSolv](#) makes this happen through a partnership with LawPay. Powered by AffiniPay, this platform is endorsed by 47 state bars and more than 50 local bars as an approved method of accepting credit card payments. They understand the dire importance of protecting your client's sensitive payment information and take security very seriously. AffiniPay is Level 1 PCI Certified, which is a fancy way of saying that the platform meets the highest of internet security standards. The partnership between TimeSolv and LawPay allows your law firm the ability to provide your clients with a safe and secure method of online bill pay. It only takes a few clicks of the mouse to pay invoices, replenish a trust account, or set up recurring payments. This translates into faster compensation for your firm.

Increasing firm efficiency

How much time do your lawyers and support team spend answering telephone calls and responding to client questions? How many of those inquiries involve billing concerns or status requests? One last question. How much of that time could be better spent on more profitable and necessary office tasks? A client portal contributes to a more efficient law office by minimizing these time-consuming interactions between your firm members and clients. Instead of calling or dropping by the office, a client can access the portal and view the information they are seeking about billing statements, trust accounts, or case developments. This frees up time for your attorneys and support staff to concentrate on more lucrative matters. A successful law office is a busy law office, which means that there is always plenty of work to be done. Let a client portal ease the burden and increase firm efficiency... which can possibly lead to increased firm profits.

Informed clients

Bill paying isn't the only benefit of a client portal. It also allows your clients to independently review what work has been done on their matters without calling the office and taking time away from you or your support staff. As work is completed on a case, you can program updates to the client portal... even before an invoice is generated. Let's say you are working on a complex contract dispute with a client who demands constant updates on the status of the case. With the client portal, your client can easily log in and view completed tasks without contacting the office. Not only does this allow you to focus your attentions on more profitable tasks, it also helps establish a successful attorney client relationship. One of the most common complaints about attorneys is a failure to keep clients informed about the cases. Through the client portal, you can keep your clients apprised efficiently and effectively.

Following proper protocol

Accepting credit and debit card payments can be challenging for attorneys due to complex accounting and banking regulation requirements. A simple swipe of a credit card is not sufficient to meet proper protocol, but once again, the partnership between TimeSolv and Law Pay steps in to assist. Law Pay's bar association endorsements are partly due to their understanding of these payment collection requirements and their development of a system that helps legal practices adhere to them. They work exclusively within the legal community and understand what is at stake for your firm. Trust account deposits are made securely with access restrictions to prevent unauthorized usage or account overdrafts. With TimeSolv and LawPay handling your client portal, you have two partners working hard to keep you in compliance with your state's IOLTA requirements.

It's easy to implement a client portal that provides your clients with the convenience they want and your law firm with the quick and compliant credit card payments it needs. TimeSolv offers a free, no obligation 30-day trial so you can explore the benefits of their client portal, as well as all their numerous other benefits. Click [here](#) to get started today.

About Erika Winston:

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