

# LEGAL MANAGEMENT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL ADMINISTRATORS

## Member Insights

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### IS IT YOUR JOB TO MAKE THE OFFICE RUN MORE EFFICIENTLY?

It is easy to point to the office manager as the person having responsibility for making the office run more efficiently — and perhaps that is where the buck stops, eventually. The proverbial “buck,” however, makes — or should make — many stops along the way.

In my experience, the best way to achieve operational and practice-related efficiencies is to approach that as you would any other office challenge: 1) the goal needs to be clearly communicated by firm management as a priority requiring everyone's participation; and 2) a method for monitoring and measuring improvement needs to be established.

Beginning four or five years ago, our firm did just that. We found that due to several new legal staff hires and increased client demands for fee-capped billings, a dip in billing efficiencies had occurred. The goal of improving timekeeper efficiencies was rolled out to the legal team in presentations and at quarterly and annual review meetings.

New reports were introduced and distributed to each billing timekeeper, reflecting his or her year-to-date efficiency, by client. The three-month rolling average efficiency also was provided, to measure whether there was improvement in efficiency for any timekeepers who were below target after the first quarter of the year. Everyone was focused on their own performance, as well as the performance of the team as a



whole.

After three years, we realized an increase of close to 3 percent on our billing efficiency, which made a significant impact on firm profits. We had similar success with an efficiency effort focused on shortening the billing cycle, which again had a positive impact on collections and firm profits. So, while the office manager needs to facilitate and monitor these efforts, getting **everyone** involved is really the key to success!



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