

PHILIPS



Success Story: Philips Digital Pocket Memo 9350™ Helps Cassels Brock & Blackwell Save Thousands and Improve Work/Life Balance for its Attorneys

Challenge:

Cassels Brock & Blackwell, LLP is a law firm based in Toronto, Ontario employing 160 attorneys, nearly 300 additional support staff, and incorporating practice areas ranging from securities to business law to entertainment.

The firm previously used Dictaphone analog tape devices for its attorneys' dictation needs that included letter composition, meeting documentation, memos and instructions to assistants. When transcription was required, the microcassette was transferred to an assistant by courier or overnight mail, if necessary. Following creation of the draft document, the assistant erased the cassette and returned it to the attorney for re-use.

Since Cassels Brock attorneys frequently travel for clients, this system incurred significant postal and courier expenses. In addition, periodic failures of the moving parts in the recorder mechanisms, as well as the need to regularly purchase replacement microcassettes, created considerable maintenance costs for the firm. Consequently, the firm began searching for a solution that would reduce fees for dictation processing and lower maintenance costs but *without* interfering with the user experience that attorneys had grown accustomed to.

Solution:

Digital dictation equipment that replaces a fragile recording head and microcassette with a solid-state memory card, and allows instant, electronic access to recordings, was the ideal solution. Cassels Brock initiated an extensive evaluation program to assess devices from vendors including Dictaphone, Olympus, Philips and Sony. The Philips Digital Pocket Memo (DPM), which closely resembles a professional dictation cassette recorder both in design and operation, featured the lowest learning curve of all devices tested -- without compromising functionality. In addition, the DPM's design offers a familiar sliding thumb-switch to control recording and playback functions, a desirable feature that makes the transition from analog to digital simple, convenient and intuitive. Versions of the DPM with a pushbutton interface are also available.

The DPM, when combined with download to PC software, builds in additional flexibility to Cassels Brock's document workflow. Audio files can be easily transferred to a computer and then transmitted to another location, or shared on the firm's Local Area Network. Cassels Brock also opted to install Auto-Notify, a handy feature that notifies the assistant via a pop-up window when there is new transcription work.

--more--

Cassels Brock initially launched a five-user pilot program with the Digital Pocket Memo 9300 and gradually rolled out additional units, reaching nearly 60 over the course of a year. The firm has now begun transitioning to the new Philips Digital Pocket Memo 9350 that offers faster file transfer, longer recording time, and a sleeker design. To complete the digital dictation/transcription solution, the firm also purchased a number of SpeechMike® Executives, a PC Transcription, that includes transcription software, headset and foot control devices that assistants can use to easily transcribe voice files directly into their PC.

Benefits:

The gradual move to digital dictation has already yielded substantial benefits both for Cassels Brock and its employees, according to Office Services Supervisor Ben Minaei-Roudsari. He estimates that the savings from reduced maintenance, postage/courier services, and replacement cassette tapes amounts to US\$15,000 to \$20,000 annually. In addition, reduced downtime while waiting for equipment repairs means more documents can be processed in a given time period.

The firm is also realizing improved efficiencies. In the past, an attorney would first need to identify an assistant who was available to transcribe a particular document before passing along the microcassette. With the DPM digital solution, audio recordings are stored in a common network area, so the attorney can simply upload it into a queue from which any assistant in the company can instantly access it for transcription. Also, if the dictation workload becomes too heavy for the in-house staff, the dictation files can be sent electronically to an outside transcription vendor, eliminating potential workflow bottlenecks.

“Since I began using the Philips DPM, I no longer have to worry about lost dictation tapes, while the quality of the recording and ability to review my dictation on computer has made my practice much more efficient,” said Glenn Zakaib, a Commercial Litigation Partner at Cassels Brock. “Also, the ability to download dictation and be able to start again immediately with a clean disk means I no longer have to worry about looking for recording media.”

The Philips DPM 9350 supports any size Secure Digital or Multimedia card, a substantial improvement over the DPM 9300, which was limited to an 8 MB SmartMedia card. It also has significantly improved download speed and an improved user interface.

“It’s very nice to have more space for longer dictation,” added Zakaib. “I rarely filled up the cards on the previous model, but now I have more flexibility and don’t need to worry about running out of space. The faster download space is very welcome also. I simply place my DPM in its docking station and the audio files are transmitted to my assistant for transcription in a flash.”

Cassels Brock employees now find that it is much easier to telecommute, a particularly useful benefit for employees wishing to work part time while on extended maternity leave. “With a laptop, a mobile phone and a Philips Digital Pocket Memo, our employees can work from home as easily as they can in the office,” added Minaei-Roudsari. “Now they can dictate their letters or memos, instantly email them to an assistant and get the final document back the same day. This was impossible with conventional tape recording equipment.”

For more information, please visit <http://www.dictation.philips.com> or call Rick Gallahan, Philips Dictation Systems, Director of Marketing, at 410-349-4685.