

## Making business better: New law firm strengthens business by integrating Time Matters® and PCLaw® Software

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### Momjian Anderer, LLC

#### Overview

**Firm:** Momjian Anderer, LLC

**Interviewed:** Attorney Stephen J. Anderer, J.D., Ph.D., Partner. Other founding partner is Mark A. Momjian. Meredith Brennan and Lauren Sorrentino complete the attorney roster.

**Location:** Philadelphia, PA

#### Industry/Customer Profile:

Family Law: Divorce and the economic issues associated with divorce (i.e., equitable distribution, spousal support, alimony and counsel fees); child custody; child support, special relief; and domestic violence issues

Mental Health Law: Attorney Stephen Anderer also has his Ph.D. in clinical psychology so mental health law and other areas of law with a psychological angle make up approximately 20 percent of his business (i.e., competency issues for guardianship, competency to execute wills, psychological and neuropsychological damages, commitment to psychiatric hospitals, licensing actions against psychologists, child abuse and neglect cases and mental health issues in death penalty cases (pro bono).

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### The Customer

*"It's not because things are difficult that we dare not venture. It's because we dare not venture that they are difficult."—Seneca*

This quote embodies the truth of so many law practices which became stunted in their growth and bogged down in the muck of old technology. Ready to break free and grow, more and more lawyers are becoming modern-day pioneers and taking calculated risks to brave change in search of progress.

In early 2010, Mark Momjian and Stephen Anderer joined this league of pioneers by departing from their long association with a 190-lawyer firm. Striking out on their own, they became partners in a new law practice ... and a new staff size of four lawyers, a legal assistant, a secretary and a part-time bookkeeper. When asked about how he and his partner came to their decision to change, Stephen explains, "It was something we had contemplated a long time. We had a vision of the kind of practice we wanted to create. We liked the idea of having more freedom to make our own decisions about how to run our practice and we looked forward to seeing a direct connection between what we put in and what we got out. Our practice also was conducive to operating in a smaller environment, particularly given the new technology that's available."

Their dream was successfully realized with their creation of Momjian Anderer, LLC.

### The Problem

One of the essential tasks for a successful start-up is to obtain a fully functional practice support system, starting from day one. Momjian Anderer, LLC needed case- and matter-management software as well as billing and accounting software. They were searching for something easy to get up and running and trained on that was also fluid. They needed a fully integrated and proven system. Knowing all too well the inefficiencies of a static/outdated system, it was important for their smaller firm to find a modern, proficient, and seemingly effortless way to practice at the higher level to which they had become accustomed. Stephen says that they believed they were "in a position to get the best technology out there ... to do some things that would have been more difficult to implement in a larger environment." Stephen held on to something both his and Mark's mentor had said to them 17 years prior: "I just wish there was a button I could push where all the information on a client would come up and everything I need to know would be right there when the client called ... "

// *With Time Matters, you pull up the contacts and the matter and it's all there. You have all the contact information... You have all the events going back... All the documents and e-mails are accessible right there on one screen. That's fabulous.*//

—Stephen Anderer, Partner,  
Momjian Anderer, LLC

## The Solution

When Mark and Stephen decided to pull the trigger, they began looking into hardware first. They were referred to Tom Caffrey and his team from Premier Software. Tom and his team stood out from all the other consultants because they spoke not just about hardware, but about the importance of software. Because other consultants didn't deal specifically with law firms, they didn't know what a start-up law firm really needed. Stephen says, "You really should have a consultant who knows the software and the training, not just the hardware. The software was integral ... the computers would be paperweights otherwise."

Premier Software supports firms nationally and specializes in small law firm system support using Time Matters® and PCLaw® software from LexisNexis®. Their team of experts recommended using Time Matters (calendar, contact, matter, document, e-mail, and phone management) and integrating it with PCLaw (time recording, client billing, trust accounting, and firm financial reporting) thus creating a legal-specific solution for the new firm.

Thinking back to what his mentor had said, Stephen recalls the elusive "magic button" he had wished for and declares, "We have that now."

## The Results

Time Matters and PCLaw have proven to be everything Momjian Anderer, LLC was looking for. Stephen notes that the return on investment was obvious. "The investment in the software is paying for itself quickly. Before, we had to have staff do the work that is now being done with software; that staff would clearly have cost more. Not to mention we're saving our client's time and our own time as well."

### *Time Matters and Staying Organized*

"With Time Matters, you pull up the contacts and the matter and it's all there. You have all the contact information—for the spouse, the children, the accountant, the experts, the judge. You have all the events going back—the meetings, the telephone calls, the court appearances. All the documents and e-mails are accessible right there on one screen. That's fabulous," says Stephen.

Tom Caffrey installed their hardware and Time Matters and PCLaw software and concurrently provided Web-based training to the staff before actual start-up. From day one, both Time Matters case management and PCLaw billing and accounting systems were ready to go. "Really, it was simple right from the beginning. We were able to hit the ground running."

// PCLaw helps our firm contain costs. We're able to function with a leaner staff than we would otherwise need... And the staff we have doesn't need to focus so much on things that aren't valuable billable tasks for the client. //

—Stephen Anderer, Partner,  
Mornjian Anderer, LLC

Giving an example of the difference Time Matters has made, Stephen recalls: “When we first started, I had a client who called late in the day and was upset about a pleading the other side had filed and specifically about a date in the pleading on which something had happened. My immediate reaction to the phone call was ‘Oh, I better write this down, then I’m going to have to call this other attorney who’s working with me on the case and have her get me a copy of the pleading tomorrow, and then I can call the client back’”... But then Stephen remembered in Time Matters, everything he needed to address the issue was already saved and easily accessible. Stephen was able to quickly pull up opposing counsel’s pleading while he was speaking to the client. Recalling his thoughts as he opened her file in Time Matters, Stephen related: “I thought, ‘Oh, I see what happened! She’s referring to an exhibit that’s attached to the pleading, not the pleading itself, and that is leading her to misinterpret the significance of the date.’ I was able to immediately see what the problem was and deal with it right then and there. It saved me significant time and prevented my client from remaining upset during the time it could have taken me to get back to her!”

#### **Contacts—BlackBerry®—Calendaring**

Each staff member has a smartphone (BlackBerry®) that is synchronized with his or her hosted Microsoft® Exchange account. Events and contacts are matched automatically between their BlackBerry smartphones, Outlook® and Exchange®, and Time Matters.

“Having the contacts set up in a way so that it’s part of everyone’s contacts is great. For example, if there is an expert for a particular type of case—all our lawyers can be listed in that expert’s contact file and the expert’s contact information will go to all of their BlackBerry smartphones. That way, if anyone’s out on the road and needs to call, the number will be right there. And with Time Matters group calendaring, we’re able to pull up everybody’s calendar, schedule a meeting in everyone’s calendar and it’s done as easily as it could possibly be. We’ve been thrilled with Time Matters,” says Stephen.

### **PCLaw: The benefits of integrating billing and accounting**

#### **Simplified Billing**

“With PCLaw, how much easier it is now to do the time recording and billing has been striking to me. We record our time right on the computer. I can pull up the client’s name when I start working for a client, I click the ‘stopwatch’ to get it going and when I’m done I click it again to stop it. I often can use two- to four-letter codes that will then print a description of the type of work I did. Then I can go on to the next

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client. When it is time to generate bills, it is simply a matter of clicking on “Create Bill” and the program compiles all of the time entries and costs. If a client calls about a bill, I can pull it up instantly ... it’s right there at my fingertips. For clients who experienced the way billing had been compared to now—it’s night and day,” Stephen says.

In fact, because of PCLaw, Momjian Anderer LLC opened their new law firm on February 8, and were able to get their first bills out on March 1!

### **Accounting**

“The firm accounting is great with PCLaw; very intuitive. The time is at my fingertips and I can pull everyone’s time up and quickly see how much everyone has billed in the last month and can see the value of that time. I can also quickly access how much we’re spending and how much is coming in,” explains Stephen. Monitoring this in any firm is important, and in a start-up it can be imperative for continued growth. “PCLaw helps our firm contain costs. We’re able to function with a leaner staff than we would otherwise need ... And the staff we have doesn’t need to focus so much on things that aren’t valuable billable tasks for the client.”

### **Overall**

Every pioneer knows that when you set out on your adventure—you’re going to have to bring certain supplies. For Stephen and Mark of Momjian Anderer, LLC, a vendor like Premier Software, coupled with Time Matters and PCLaw, were the fundamental supplies needed to help these pioneers successfully travel from where they were to where they needed to be.

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