



PRODUCTS



ORGANIZE

- NetDocuments
- ndMail
- OCR



PLAN

- ndThread



DELIVER

- SetBuilder

Ice Miller Thrives with Cloud-First Strategy and Document Management

ABOUT ICE MILLER

As an Am Law 200-ranked law firm with over 100 years of history, Ice Miller has built a reputation for putting the needs of the client first — whether it's a Fortune 500 corporation, a government entity, or a nonprofit. The firm's 340 legal professionals advise clients on all aspects of complex legal issues across 20+ practice areas and always strive to understand each client's needs in order to help them build, grow, and protect their most valued assets.

A LONG TIME COMING

Believe it or not, the Ice Miller team had been anxious to improve their document management system (DMS) for nearly a decade.

"We were on OpenText eDOCS and that was on-prem, spread across multiple libraries in multiple physical locations," said Steve Johnson, Ice Miller's Director of IT Applications. "It was really on its last legs. It wasn't very fast or very nimble. It was hard to search."

"Our users were frustrated with it on a daily basis," added Kelly Kaustky, an IT project manager at Ice Miller. **In short, their DMS was long overdue for an upgrade.**

"We needed to create a new environment that consolidated all of our email and documents together and gave us an easier interface to not only store our documents, but also to *find* them," Steve explained.

PRIORITIZING CLOUD-NATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Before turning their attention to document management, Ice Miller had already committed to the cloud. “We as a firm determined about three or four years ago that we’d become more of a cloud-first organization,” Steve said.

“Ultimately, the cloud-first component of NetDocuments was one of the game changers for us,” he continued. “The DNA of NetDocuments was really in line with where we’re going with all of our applications, and the stability and other benefits that come with that.”



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GETTING BUY-IN ACROSS THE FIRM

When you’re making a decision that impacts over 750 people across your firm, you want to make sure you get it right on the first try — so Ice Miller ran NetDocuments through the gauntlet.

“We had a large group of people involved in the selection and approval before we even got to the implementation stage,” Kelly explained. “On the selection committee, there were partners, associates, staff... We had the IT team, the Information Governance team, and people who represented our administrative departments.”

Of course, people were more than ready to embrace a new DMS. Kelly noted, “Our users were clamoring for a new system,” Steve added, “We often said that the bar was really low, and it was easy for us to step over. **But creating the win that we did was another story.**”

DELIVERING A STATE-OF-THE-ART IMPLEMENTATION

Once the team decided to move forward with NetDocuments, they needed someone who could offer the right expertise to get them started on the right foot. They chose an implementation partner who’d already proven their value on several other projects: [Kraft Kennedy](#).

Kelly explained: “For me, the reason we went with Kraft Kennedy was twofold: first, our historical relationship and their excellent service. But their history of delivering NetDocuments for other firms really spoke to us. They’ve done it well, and that gave us a lot of comfort in selecting them.”



“We felt most comfortable with Kraft Kennedy being able to pull us through this and get us to the end successfully,” Steve added. “They had an answer for every question that we had. They knew how to solve the problems that we didn’t know how to solve.”

IMPLEMENTATION, INTERRUPTED

Just as things got started, there was a bump in the road that no one could have predicted: the pandemic.

“We kicked off the project a month before the wheels came off and COVID-19 became the way we were all living,” said Steve. “It turned into a four-month pause on the project.”



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Kelly Kaustky, IT Project Manager – Ice Miller



But Kraft Kennedy made sure that when the team was ready to re-engage, they were able to move full steam ahead.

“When we kicked back up again, Kraft had already pivoted seamlessly to remote,” said Kelly. “We did a review of where we left off to get everybody back up to speed, and then we just kept marching forward from there. There was no bumpy transition at all; there was just a four-month pause.”

Flexibility on all sides was critical to making the transition successful — and they pulled it off, even with everyone participating remotely.

“It went really smoothly, considering we were in an environment we weren’t anticipating. We also had never deployed a large-scale, enterprise-wide product in this way before,” Steve noted.

KICKING THE TIRES DURING PILOT TESTING

Given the size of their firm, Ice Miller knew it was necessary to iron out any potential problems before trying to roll out to all 750 users.

“We had a large pilot so we could give the tires a good strong kick,” Kelly said.



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Steve Johnson, Director of IT Applications – Ice Miller



They also ensured their pilot group included team members from across the firm: “We cast a wide net to make sure we were representative of the firm, and not just doing what IT wants,” she continued. “We made sure we did thorough testing to accommodate any special needs that certain practice groups had, and Kraft Kennedy guided us through that with a fine-toothed comb. Overall, it went really well.”

FULLY-SUPPORTED TRAINING

Even with such thorough pilot testing, Ice Miller didn’t want to drop the ball when it came time to implement NetDocuments with the rest of the firm.

“We have an internal training team that’s phenomenal, but they’re a small team,” explained Steve. “Making the decision to invest in an outside training partner who knows NetDocuments and could help us create materials and conduct training was critical to our success.”

They partnered with Encoretech — a team that had a strong relationship with Kraft Kennedy.

“Before we went live, Kraft had meetings with Encoretech without us to ensure everything was on track. Then we’d meet all together and get the pointed guidance we needed,” explained Kelly. “Our training was a huge success because of the great collaboration

between Kraft, Encoretech, and our firm.” Steve added, “It was a sizable investment, but we definitely marked it as one of the big wins from the project.”

TAKING GUIDANCE FROM THE EXPERTS

Having an experienced implementation partner was invaluable for Ice Miller.

“Kraft did a great job of steering us toward a scalable solution that would provide us with the things we need now and into the future.” Steve said.

That experience paid off again during their document migration.

“The old system allowed a lot of freedom to do things that weren’t normalized, like creating folders that weren’t tied to a client matter,” explained Kelly. “Steve and I knew we’d never be able to migrate everything.”



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Kelly Kaustky, IT Project Manager – Ice Miller



But Kraft Kennedy knew how to solve the problem with ease: “They said, ‘Oh, we’ve done that before, and here’s a script we can tweak.’ It gave us some heartburn, but it was a non-event for them. All the folders came over, we didn’t lose data, and everything’s there and searchable.” Steve added, “Those migration scripts were magic. It was fantastic.”

ACHIEVING THE UNBELIEVABLE

Without a doubt, Ice Miller pulled off an incredible implementation with the help of Kraft Kennedy and Encoretech. Already, they’re seeing enormous benefits across the firm.

RAPID ADOPTION

“Day one, hour one, we were up and running,” Kelly said. “Documents were being edited, new documents were being saved, emails were being filed. It was a success. It was great.”

In the first three days, the firm reached 90% adoption.

Steve explained, "I think a lot of that success goes to the way we deployed with Encoretch, and with the engagement and reinforcement from the top-down and bottom-up as a firm. Nearly everyone in the firm was engaged in this project. Our chief managing partner was adamant with the partnership and across the firm that this had to have people's attention. The statistics speak for themselves: we did not have to do much to get people using NetDocuments."

Brian Podolsky, a practice group leader with Kraft Kennedy, also gives credit to Ice Miller's thorough preparation.

"We tested that deployment over and over again to ensure that it was stable and able to be repeated, whether the end point was in the office or on someone's laptop at home," he said. "That infrastructure was tested, verified, and I think that speaks to the level of testing and QA."

"We worked with Kraft Kennedy to hone that deployment package so it was error-free," noted Kelly.

NO COMPROMISES

Rolling out in the middle of a pandemic could have drastically changed the firm's expectations for implementation. But Ice Miller didn't have to make that shift.



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Steve Johnson, Director of IT Applications – Ice Miller



"I don't think we sacrificed anything from what our original end-goal was," said Steve. "And I think a lot of that's a testament to the platform we chose. NetDocuments remained flexible as we had to change how and when we implemented, and their tool delivers the secure, integrated, cloud-based functionality we need."



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Steve Johnson, Director of IT Applications – Ice Miller



SEEING THE LIGHT

After spending so many years with such a challenging DMS, Ice Miller is truly on cloud nine with NetDocuments.

“NetDocuments has an ideal application architecture for the world we live in today,” Steve said. “There’s a huge list of benefits, including that we are no longer dependent on managing the infrastructure, and we don’t have to worry about hardware failures causing long interruptions in service. That’s a huge one! I have not had to send any DM outage notices to the firm for six months now with NetDocuments. It’s been phenomenal in that regard.”

“With our old system, even on brand-new Windows 10 PCs, you would go to open a document and your computer would crash. It was just awful,” Kelly added. “The fact that we got rid of all that and have a stable, cloud-based system with NetDocuments is just amazing. We went from the dark ages to the future over a weekend.”

A NEW LEVEL OF SEARCHABILITY

“We quickly realized the search capabilities with NetDocuments are far and away superior to anything we’d used previously,” said Steve. “When we got all 23 million documents and emails together in a place where we could actually find them, a lot of people in the firm suddenly realized, ‘Wow! I’ve got so much out there, and I can find all this information about a client or matter.’”

“Document security within the environment became an area of focus because we could see some of the shadowy corners that weren’t easy to find in our previous DM. We had to lock some things down and open other things up,” he explained. “Managing that change was huge, but it was because we could suddenly find our stuff, which part of what makes NetDocuments so easy for people to adopt.”

WHAT'S NEXT FOR ICE MILLER?

The Ice Miller team is thriving with NetDocuments, so where do they go from here?

"We're truly cloud-first at this point," Steve shared. "Not everything is in the cloud yet, but we're moving in that direction where we don't have to manage the infrastructure, the environment itself, the patching, and everything else that goes along on-prem solutions. And this is great for my team."

As far as their NetDocuments experience, Ice Miller is already looking forward to adding new features and capabilities for users.

"We're looking to migrate away from our launch version of ethical walls to using the Workspace Security Manager, as well as implementing ndThread and more document-centric communication for the firm," explained Steve.

"Our next big firm initiative is around collaboration, so we're trying to think through that and look at the bigger picture. There are many possibilities in the NetDocuments world."

"NetDocuments is awesome," Kelly added. "The stability, the searching capabilities, the ease of use... **If you've got an old, clunky system, make the leap — it's worth it!**"

ABOUT NETDOCUMENTS

NetDocuments is the **leading cloud-based document and email management solution** to securely store and organize documents on a single platform. Backed by **20 years of experience in cloud innovation, over 3,400+ companies worldwide trust NetDocuments** to secure their data while increasing productivity and team collaboration.

Make the move to the NetDocuments cloud to get the speed, mobility, and industry-leading security companies worldwide are already taking advantage of.

Visit www.NetDocuments.com or call us at **(866) 638-3627** to learn more today.

ABOUT KRAFT KENNEDY

Kraft Kennedy is the technical and strategic consulting partner for law firms and corporate legal departments.

We have been solving essential business and IT challenges since 1988.

The knowledge resource for industry best practices, we are known for our uniquely deep expertise in IT infrastructure, cybersecurity, desktop design, project management, DMS, advisory services, and procurement.