Best Authority Passes with Flying Colors

Krugliak, Wilkins, Griffiths & Dougherty Chooses Best Authority for Speed, Accuracy and Flexibility

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A t Krugliak, Wilkins, Griffiths & Dougherty Co., L.P.A. (KWGD), we look for quality software solutions to help our attorneys and support staff be more productive and efficient, with the goal of providing better service to our clients. Based in Canton, our firm has four offices in Ohio with 50 attorneys and support staff. As Software Facilitator and Integration Specialist, I am tasked with handling the Information Technology (IT) and software training needs of the firm.

In early 2016, one of our lead litigation attorneys raised that it was time-consuming and onerous to generate a Table of Authorities (TOA), which is a list of citations to legal authorities within a litigation brief. Generating a TOA for longer briefs, using only Microsoft Word, often required several hours or more to complete. Additionally, when changes were made to the brief, it required a manual re-generation and review of the TOA. We were tasked with finding a better alternative.

G iven that we had an existing vendor relationship, the Firm reviewed their TOA product first. Unfortunately, this product did not fulfill some of our specialized needs. For example, their software did not allow us to customize the TOA to meet the State of Ohio's First District formatting requirements nor was it able to recognize split citations.

Seeking a more suitable alternative, I discovered Best Authority by Levit & James through an online search. Levit & James and Best Authority had a very strong legal industry presence. Upon further review, I discovered that Best Authority could easily handle the tasks that the initial software reviewed could not accomplish. Best Authority is very flexible and offers configurable schemes to modify the layout of the TOAs to satisfy the preferences of a district, court, or judge, as well as recognizing split citations. The software comes pre-packaged with 6 practical schemes, while giving users the ability to easily customize them or completely create schemes from scratch. The level of customization makes the software extremely user-friendly and useful in our environment.

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Before purchasing Best Authority, the Firm wanted to run it through a real-world test to see how it would perform. We assembled a small focus group of 4 attorneys to test Best Authority. Installing Best Authority for the trial was quick and straightforward. Training was provided by Levit & James to our attorneys and all areas of concern were addressed before starting the trial period.

One morning during the trial period, 2 related briefs appeared as a rush job, requiring TOAs to be generated, reviewed and filed by end of day by an attorney not in the focus group. **Best Authority completed the initial scan, which finds and marks all the citations in the brief, in under 60 seconds.** Imagine our surprise when both documents were processed and returned for attorney review in 30 minutes. Additional corrections were made, rescanned through Best Authority, with the final copy finalized and ready for submission. Done manually, these briefs would have taken more than five hours to complete and probably would not have allowed for a relaxed second round review of the additions or corrections.

After just two months of usage, our lawyers trust Best Authority and are impressed by the software's ability to identify and color-code citations in briefs that need attention. This makes the review process easier and more efficient. The attorneys are confident that Best Authority can find and identify all possible citations that may need review. Based on the successful trial period, the Firm purchased the software for the Litigation department. It is anticipated that the overall implementation of Best Authority for the rest of the firm will be on par with the experience of the focus group. Once the installation is complete, attorneys and staff will be trained in how to use the software to maximize the full range of its features and capabilities.

Best Authority's interface is very user-friendly because it's an add-in to Microsoft Word for Windows. This is very appealing to our attorneys and support staff, as Best Authority builds upon the already familiar Word toolset. This design feature eases resistance to learning Best Authority. Best Authority's color coding system was popular with the users, showing whether something is a citation, a suspected citation, an error, or some other aberration. This color coding makes it easy for the user to identify citations and to ensure that TOA is accurate. On average, attorneys need around 20-30 minutes to review color-coded TOAs, much less than it would take them to review the old black-and-white briefs with no color coding. In short, Best Authority was able to do everything the Firm required for TOA generation.

Based on the Firm's experience, Best Authority is a recommended purchase.

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