

Case Study

The following fictional story illustrates what a typical day could be like for an attorney who has the tools and support of a competent IT department. It's a day in the life of a junior attorney in a five attorney firm in DuPage County. Her office is in Wheaton but like many suburban attorneys she travels into the city often.

8 am, Offices of Morgan and Kamradt, Wheaton

Laura Taylor, associate, sets her coffee and bagel on her desk, logs onto her computer and checks her email (ltaylor@mk-lawoffice.com). Three clients have emailed her documents which they have reviewed and edited.

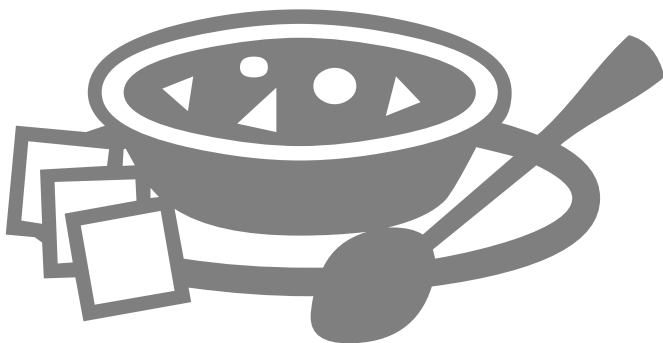
She quickly scans and organizes her voice mail messages which have been saved as audio files on her computer. Opposing counsel on the VersaCorp case has left a voicemail requesting to reschedule today's meeting for next week: his firm's network was hit by a virus and they'll be completely down for at least 2 days.

By 8:30, she's putting her coat on and on her way out the door when the new paralegal, Dawn, asks her if she has a template for the ProtegeCorp contract. Laura quickly gives Dawn the phone number for ActivMindz whose staff will train Dawn on how to use the Morgan and Kamradt document management system and will walk her through the procedure of searching the system for a similar contract which she can modify. Laura then hurries out the door and on her way to court downtown.

9:53 am Cook County Court Building

Just before entering court, Laura checks her text pager. Dawn has sent two urgent messages via email. The first is from Laura's dad. Mom's biopsy came back negative. That's a tremendous relief. Laura had been under a lot of stress about her mom, especially given the family medical history, and the good news about the biopsy lifts a huge weight from Laura's shoulders.

The second message is from the client in the case she was about to address in court. The message: "STALL! Some new information has come to light. Get a continuance any way that you can." From her pager, she emails the client back directly: "Will get a continuance but the judge won't be happy. Let's regroup as soon as possible."



11:30 am, Panera Bread, Near North Side, Chicago

Laura has a meeting in the city after court so she heads to a restaurant near the client's office. Laura orders lunch and grabs a seat as the crowd starts to build.

Before her number is even called, she has already used the free wireless hotspot at Panera and the VPN software on her laptop to remotely access her account at the office. She downloads the ProtegeCorp contract prepared by Dawn for Laura's 1pm meeting. She also downloads her email including three faxes sent by clients and forwarded to her email by her fax service.

While she eats, Laura makes a couple of quick edits to the ProtegeCorp contract and reviews the 3 faxes that were downloaded to her email. Before she leaves for her meeting, Laura logs back on to the internet and uses her fax service to send out a fax of an offer letter to Tim Daly, the opposing counsel in the liability case, whose firm doesn't have email.

6 pm, Offices of Morgan and Kamradt, Wheaton

Back from her meeting in the city, Laura is spending a few minutes entering her billing information for the day into the firm's billing software when the phone rings. It's Dan Hammond of ProtegeCorp with another minor adjustment to the contract. It seems that 40% of the time spent on the ProtegeCorp negotiation is spent handling Dan. The project is vitally important to Protege and could make or break Dan's career, so she is very understanding.

Still, she's glad for the client management software on her computer. It recognizes the phone number from caller id, and brings up the client file with her notes right away so that she can recall her last conversations and enter her notes for this one. When the call is finished, the computer notes the duration of the call and enters that time into the billing for the Protege case.



6:30 pm, Offices of Morgan and Kamradt, Wheaton

Before heading out to dinner with her boyfriend Tom, Laura sends a quick email to Jane, the firm's other paralegal. Jane is on maternity leave but since she has remote access from her home and since she is so familiar with the ProtegeCorp case particulars, she has been working from home and preparing critical documents for the case.

Laura types a quick note of thanks for the brief she sent yesterday. Having Jane work from home was truly a Godsend. Laura clicks the send button on her email and then heads out to her most challenging meeting of the day: Tonight she'll be meeting Tom's parents for the first time.