

Case Study:

Mello & Pickering Gets Peace of Mind from Reliable, Compliant Data Protection with i365 EVault SaaS

CUSTOMER SNAPSHOT

NAME

Mello & Pickering LLP

LINE OF BUSINESS

Family Law firm

LOCATION

San Jose, California

PRODUCT

EVault SaaS
Small Business Edition

CONFIGURATION

Peer-to-Peer Windows XP
network

CAPACITY

5GB data backed up

GOALS

- Ensure privacy and security of client information
- Easy-to-use service
- Fully encrypted backup data
- Compliance with all applicable statutes regarding data security and retention
- Automated alerts
- Knowledgeable, responsive customer service

SOLUTION

Replaced unreliable, problematic system with EVault SaaS for automatic backups and received preferred ABA member discount pricing.

RESULTS

Set-it-and-forget-it data backup that simplifies security and compliance, creating peace of mind.

It can be a challenge for small firms, which often lack internal IT expertise, to implement an easy-to-use, reliable and secure data protection system. That was the case for the family law firm Mello & Pickering, LLP in San Jose, California.

The firm's partners, Jennifer Mello and Traci Pickering, opened their doors in February 2007. They had worked together for five years in another family law practice before deciding to form their own. "We knew each other's work styles, so we knew we'd be a good match to go out on our own," says Mello. The firm, now three attorneys strong, prides itself on being responsive and attentive to clients. It's committed to helping people achieve clarity and resolution in their family law matters, and reach the best resolution possible.

Goals

"As lawyers we have a duty ethically and professionally—it's also required by professional rules—to protect our clients' work product. In this technological era, everything is done online, scanning, and via email, so we were concerned about protecting that electronically stored information," says Pickering. "We had no clue about how to back up data—about safety, who can access it, where it's going to go, or how secure it's going to be." Mello adds, "Another thing that's concerning for us, being a smaller law firm, is liability. If something should happen and we lose the work product on a case, we'd be looking at huge liability."

In the firm's early days, it used a data backup product from a newly-formed online backup provider recommended by another IT person. The technology employed a disk-based backup system that relied on a single-purpose, in-house data appliance. It made a local backup to an internal hard drive, then transmitted a copy to a remote location. This turned out to be "a trial by error system," says Pickering. "We weren't getting backup reports and we had no way to check it or to know if things were going wrong. And while we love to bury ourselves in our work representing clients, we also like to be able to check and see that our clients' information is being securely stored. We weren't getting the comfort level we felt we needed."

Mello and Pickering sought a new solution that would:

- Ensure privacy and security of client information
- Be easy to use
- Fully encrypt their backup data
- Comply with statutes regarding data security and retention
- Deliver automated alerts if problems occurred
- Provide knowledgeable and responsive customer service

Challenges

Besides the lack of reporting, the firm's original backup system deeply eroded confidence by developing a far more troubling problem: It stopped backing up. "The 'infamous red box' that we had in our cabinet apparently had some sort of malfunction, and we didn't know. It was terrifying," says Mello. "We realized that we needed a more reliable system," adds Pickering.

Fortunately, the firm connected with their new “IT guy” James Geraci, an expert whose specialty is helping law firms. He discovered that the “red box in the closet” was causing more than just backup problems. “Among other things, it created difficulties with traffic—it had a ‘chattering NIC’ [Network Interface Card] that flooded the network with unnecessary packets,” says Geraci.

It was paramount for the firm to have a functional backup system, of course, but the underlying need for data security—no matter what—was a key factor in the choice of a new provider. This need extended to protecting data outside the office as well. “We often take our laptops with us and work from home,” says Pickering. “We did not want a backup system that required us to back up on disks and then risk getting those disks stolen. We wanted to know that whether in or out of the office, our work product and client records would be safe.”

To answer this, the firm needed a backup system featuring flexible end-to-end encryption, which locks data before it leaves a source computer, keeps it encrypted during transmission and while in a remote electronic vault, and ensures that only the account holder has the key to decrypt the data.

Solutions

James Geraci’s analysis of Mello & Pickering’s requirements led him to outline several possible solutions. But he strongly recommended the EVault SaaS Small Business Edition from i365, A Seagate Company. It was the best fit in terms of cost, encryption, and simplicity. In addition, as members of the American Bar Association (ABA), Mello & Pickering qualified for preferred discount pricing from i365. “He clearly had used it before and felt it was easy to use and reliable. That’s pretty much all he needed to tell us,” says Pickering.

“Right off the bat with i365 we got an email welcoming us and giving us a contact person, so that if we had a question we didn’t have to go to our IT guy. It felt very user friendly.”

Geraci worked with the firm and set up the i365 EVault service in less than a day. “On our end, it was as easy as giving him a credit card number, coming up with a password, and giving him an email address. We did the first backup, got a confirmation, and that was it.”

“All of our time is devoted to working for our clients. The last thing we need to be worrying about is whether our system is backing up. With i365, that worry and stress is completely gone.”

Traci Pickering
Partner, Mello & Pickering

Results

The EVault SaaS Small Business Edition has simplified Mello & Pickering’s backups and restored peace of mind. This was reinforced for them the first—and so far, only—time they’ve had an issue. Pickering recalls, “We got an email saying there was a problem and that we hadn’t been backed up in the previous 24 hours. James contacted the i365 support person, who was able to take remote control of our system and fix the problem by the end of the day. This was huge compared to our old system, where it was a nightmare trying to get hold of support.”

Says Mello, “We love the i365 email notices, and I now know that if I’m NOT getting an email, all is good. It’s also easy for us to log in and confirm that our firm and client data is protected.”

Pickering sums up: “All of our time is devoted to working for our clients. The last thing we need to be worrying about is whether our system is backing up. With i365, that worry and stress is completely gone.”