

Case Study

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Ricoh Managed Review Services Helps Law Firm Tackle the Case of Redacting Information On-the-fly—While Slashing Costs

Ricoh Managed Review Services completed the redaction project in just 12 hours—half the time allotted and an 80 percent savings for the law firm.

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Law firms are accustomed to uncertainty when it comes to the outcome of a case or trial. New evidence can emerge that casts new light on the facts. Jurors might not reach a verdict, forcing a retrial or scrapping the case altogether. Opposing counsel can make such a formidable argument that the verdict swings in their favor.

The best attorneys know they need to be prepared for Murphy's Law at every turn. Especially with so much information to capture, transform and manage. Law firms are easily overwhelmed as they try to minimize the risk of information mishandling while meeting critical judicial and court deadlines.

One of the most prominent litigation firms in the U.S. deals with ambiguity every day as it aggressively helps its clients seek justice from the people and institutions that harm them. The firm takes on cases and causes few others are willing to champion—often winning sizeable awards for its clients, setting new legal precedent and bringing about change.

This firm didn't become top tier by being unprepared. However, sometimes the unexpected does occur and quick action is required. So when files for a large healthcare case subject to HIPAA privacy laws came back without the necessary identifying information redacted, the firm needed a knowledgeable and thorough partner to correct the errors—fast and affordably.

CHALLENGE

- Tight deadline to submit redacted documents to court and opposing counsel
- Information in 30 multi-tab Excel® spreadsheets that converted to nearly 7,000 TIFF pages
- Up to \$10,000 per-incident fines if information not completely redacted

SOLUTION

- Ricoh Managed Review Services enlisted to devise quick, cost-effective digital redaction solution
- "Slow down, to speed up" approach
- Redaction done in native Excel files to speed process, lower costs

RESULTS

- Redaction completed in 12 hours—half the allotted time and an 80 percent cost savings
- Redacted files submitted to court and opposing counsel on time
- Ricoh demonstrated process management skills and asked the right questions

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The firm was already working with Ricoh's eDiscovery services team in one of its East Coast offices and learned of Ricoh's latest addition to the offering—Managed Review Services. As one of the largest providers of legal document services in the U.S., Ricoh seemed to be uniquely equipped to handle an extremely tight turnaround with necessary care while containing costs.

CHALLENGE

Redaction isn't what it used to be—a manual, paper-based process where markers were used to black out areas of personal identifying information. Now, most litigation information is electronic, requiring digital tools and techniques to strike information such as phone and social security numbers from the public record.

This law firm originally relied on a staffing company for a redaction solution. However, the work arrived back at the East Coast office incomplete and riddled with errors just days before it was due to the court and opposing counsel. A two-day extension was granted. But even so, they worried the redaction work wouldn't be done in time.

There were 30 multi-tab Excel® spreadsheets that had to be converted to nearly 7,000 unalterable TIFFed pages so no claims of information tampering could be raised. Each Excel document tab turns into at least 55 pages once it's converted to a TIFF file, resulting in many unnecessary blank pages. It would take a team of up to eight Ricoh eDiscovery staff, working round the clock, to redact all the required personal identifying information of those named in the documents—to the tune of several thousand dollars.

While the cost seemed steep to the law firm, the cost of not ensuring all the information got redacted was much higher. The firm could face fines of up to \$10,000 for each mishandled incident.

In order to hit the deadline, the law firm felt it had no choice but to bite the bullet and pay the high cost of a typical redaction process. But Ricoh's Managed Review Services team had other ideas.

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SOLUTION

With the clock ticking, Ricoh's Managed Review Services team made an unusual request of the law firm: Slow down, to speed up.

Ricoh arranged a conference call within 24 hours with the firm's partners, other stakeholders at the firm and its own internal resources to discuss alternatives to the typically time-consuming and costly digital redaction process. During that call, Ricoh presented several potential solutions they believed could reduce redaction time by about one-third. Ricoh then engaged its broader eDiscovery support team to determine which of the proposed solutions would be viable and most effective.

One piece of information uncovered during the call was especially enlightening—99 percent of each document needed to be redacted. Given this, Ricoh initially thought it made sense to use an approach called inverse redaction that draws around the information that doesn't need to be

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redacted—the opposite of the normal redaction approach. But there was a catch. There was a fee to get the data processed into Relativity in order to use the inverse redaction approach.

Another solution seemed even better. Instead of redacting the spreadsheets within the TIFF images, where it's difficult to line up rows and columns, why not work in the native Excel files? With this approach, Ricoh could search for the limited information that didn't need to be redacted and then black out the remaining lines of information. It was much like the old paper and marker approach—yet digitized. Once complete, a TIFF could be produced that was truly redacted.

The law firm was sold. Ricoh worked with the law firm's IT staff to set up an FTP site to transfer the files back and forth. In the end, Ricoh was able to complete the redaction project far quicker than anticipated—at a much lower cost than the traditional digital redaction process.

RESULTS

By slowing down, to speed up, Ricoh devised a redaction solution that was expedited much more quickly than the traditional digital process—at a much lower cost. Additionally, Ricoh's transparency—along with its team-based approach—led to the ultimate solution that far exceeded the quality of the firm's initial redaction solution.

Quick Turnaround, Substantial Savings

Once the group agreed to a solution, the redaction project was completed in a mere 12 hours—half the anticipated time allotted—with plenty of time to provide the court and opposing counsel with high-integrity documentation. And costs were reduced substantially from the original estimate for traditional digital redaction services. In the end, Ricoh was able to complete the work for 80 percent less than the original estimate.

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Tight Process Control, Evident Transparency

Ricoh brought the full force of its eDiscovery solutions team to the law firm early in the engagement, demonstrating its well-honed process management skills and asking questions to make sure the redaction work was done right. The law firm felt like it had complete control over the initiative without having to do the tedious work of redacting the information itself. This was a welcome change compared to its initial staffing company solution where no questions were asked and the results were chockfull of errors.

A Complete eDiscovery Offering

eDiscovery capabilities have been in Ricoh's portfolio for quite some time. With the recent addition of Managed Review Services, Ricoh now has a full suite of services that law firms and corporate counsel can enlist to handle the growing volume of information generated in legal proceedings. As law firms increasingly need redaction and other document review services, they can be confident that Ricoh is tested and ready to tackle the case—no matter the situation or legal context.

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