



Services: IT Projects, Document Management, Practice Management

Industry: Legal

Website: derreverelaw.com

Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad Gets More Done with Tech Innovates with NetDocuments & ZenCase Cloud Platforms

Michael Stevens is the Managing Partner of Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad ("DSB&C"), and after 24 months of using NetDocuments, still marvels at the content platform's stability. "We used to be so anxious about our DMS and third-party integrations 'breaking' when we needed them most. NetDocuments is 100% reliable and provides superior stability so we can focus on our work."

For Stevens, this stability is on display daily with NetDocuments and its deep integration with the firm's cloud-based practice management platform, ZenCase, which provides greater automation and workflows around client intake and document creation.

"NetDocuments and ZenCase are working hard to make their platforms relevant, 'sticky,' and cutting edge. And I'm grateful because it benefits all of us."

Flexibility and Innovation

DSB&C went live on NetDocuments in January 2021 and ZenCase six months later. Since then, the firm has expanded and refined how it utilizes the features of NetDocuments and ZenCase.

According to Stevens who also chairs the firm’s subrogation and real estate divisions, speed and flexibility are what attracted him to the cloud platforms. “That’s in part why I chose both ... it was never a “one size fits all” proposition for the firm. Instead, it’s - tell us how you practice law, and we’ll tell you how to do it even better.”

Channeling flexibility and technology innovation focused on how legal professionals can do their best work, NetDocuments and ZenCase take an age-old challenge like going paperless and provide creative solutions. “There are not a lot of platforms that have come up with a good way to paperlessly have the life of a document flow through the firm,” notes Stevens. “The document lifecycle takes on a new meaning in a digital age and **NetDocuments has not only come up with some interesting productivity solutions, but the integration with ZenCase provides substantially more automation and workflow around the process.** These continual innovations are amazing and are completely in sync with our cloud-forward approach to best serving our clients and litigating in the virtual age.”

Leveraging Group Thinking (and input)

Initially established to help vet, review, and thoroughly test and trial NetDocuments, the firm’s technology committee, which includes associates, partners, IT, and support staff, have maintained a critical role in the evolution of the firm’s document management system (DMS) as well as the ZenCase practice management platform. “Initially, I didn’t think the committee was going to live on, but both NetDocuments and ZenCase continue to improve and add new functionality and features and push them to us on a regular cadence. Once we see what’s ‘new and improved,’ I lean into the committee to take the new features and make them our own.”

Stevens shares: “For example, when NetDocuments released Folder Packs last year, which allow for subfolders to be automatically populated when you create a case based on matter type, and assign them to workspace templates, I went back to the committee and got them involved in the creation of what folders we’ll have, depending on practice groups. They made sure we had everything lined up, and then we hired Element Technologies to manage the technical end since they are legal IT experts and veterans in working in NetDocuments. They helped

“

“We we hired Element Technologies to manage the technical end since they are legal IT experts and veterans in working in NetDocuments.”

- Michael Stevens, Managing Partner,
Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad

”

us create our folder packs based on what the committee had come up with for each practice group, further evidencing the cohesive nature between our internal teams and our technology and IT partners.”

“NetDocuments works hard to make their platform relevant, adding new features like Folder Packs, and continuing to provide innovative solutions. And I’m grateful because it benefits all of us. So, whether you decide to adopt new features or not, you still have it there ... you automatically inherit all-new platform innovation and that cannot be overstated.”

“ZenCase releases new features every month. Some are small updates that help us streamline existing processes, others are more substantial, like Outlook integration of calendaring and email, or the

Automated Time Manager™ technology. Our team reviews each of the enhancements and determines how we can benefit from them and if we need to update internal processes to utilize the new functionality. In some instances, we request enhancements or modifications to support our existing and planned process improvements of the firm.”



Synchronized Partnering

When the firm vetted and picked Element to oversee IT projects including data migration, system implementations, and cloud integrations, its focus was always on finding a trustworthy, reliable, and long-term business partner. “Part of picking our

DMS and practice/case management solutions came down to only doing this once. I want to be able to find my partners, be married to them, and feel like we have this enduring partnership. With NetDocuments, after the first introduction, I knew I had the next-generation document management system. They did a very good job distinguishing themselves and not only telling me yes but “showing me” yes. I had a similar experience with ZenCase ... right from the start they were completely transparent, accountable, and candid about where they stood without me having to go through six layers of the same question to get to know who we are and what we need. **I realize the ability to align the best in class when it comes to DMS, PMS, and legal IT with Element is a privilege.**”

Thoughtful Leadership

Today, thanks to the stability and reliability of the NetDocuments and ZenCase platforms, Michael Stevens and his team never have anxiety working on the firm's systems. "There is just a true stability factor that lets us focus on producing our best work. If I gave my employees software that is going to freak them out or make them anxious on top of an already naturally stressful job, then I am not being a good manager or a good colleague," shares Stevens.

The firm is focused on doing everything possible to help staff improve their daily experience and deliver superior client service. Now that the firm is fully remote, there must be unequivocal trust in the technology especially mission-critical cloud applications including document and practice management. "That's where Element has come in and saved the day ... to make sure that our 70+ employees have the tech, data, and support they need, and the necessary training to work from wherever."

“

“That’s where Element has come in and saved the day ... to make sure that our 70+ employees have the tech, data, and support they need, and the necessary training to work from wherever.”

- Michael Stevens, Managing Partner, Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad

”

Recognizing that ZenCase and NetDocuments are the firm's most critical systems, the integration between the two, and with other applications is extremely important. "I know that both NetDocuments and ZenCase are consistently enhancing their integrations and connectors. As they grow and mature, it gives us more opportunities to produce new ways to leverage new capabilities to be even more efficient," adds Stevens.

Why ZenCase? Like NetDocuments, the major advantage of ZenCase is flexibility. "There was no other platform that offered the flexibility in helping me create my virtual law firm. ZenCase grows with our firm's technological journey, they can take you where you are today and help you build on where you want to be in the future. **That's what I wanted! I want to be on the cutting edge of technology in my field, produce a better product for my clients, give better representation, and the best results.**"

Technology to Grow With

DSB&C has grown by 30% within the last year, adding the entire practice group of an international law firm including new offices in New York and New Jersey. Both NetDocuments and ZenCase are rolled out across the expanding firm and Element remains the go-to IT expert overseeing all data migration and implementation services and helping with application onboarding. ZenCase is the firm hub for everything. Stevens loves tech and is very hands-on when it comes to helping employees get the most out of tech. “We show our staff how their day gets better with ZenCase, integrated with NetDocuments.” Stevens is constantly tinkering with the platforms and looking for ways to increase transparency and give all staff, not just the C-suite, access to useful metrics and key performance indicators. “I want my team members to know exactly where they stand as it relates to billings, utilization, client satisfaction, and so forth. How can we hide any of that and expect peak performance?”

Michael Stevens concludes: “At the end of the day, the buck should stop with us as the legal service provider and platforms like NetDocuments and ZenCase. We are betting on the stability and reliability of our technology, asking our clients to trust us, something we look forward to proving time after time.

“Both NetDocuments and ZenCase are rolled out across the expanding firm and Element remains the go-to IT expert overseeing all data migration and implementation services and helping with application onboarding.”

- Michael Stevens, Managing Partner,
Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad

About Element

Element is an award-winning NetDocuments platinum-level partner recognized as SML Partner of the Year in 2021 and Corporate Legal Partner of the Year in 2022. The Element team, with over 200 successful migrations and 60+ years of hands-on legal tech experience, helps organizations across the spectrum of NetDocuments DMS needs including selection, design, data migration, application integration, and user training. In addition, Element implements practice management solutions and is a preferred migration partner of ZenCase and is increasingly called upon to deliver specific NetDocuments-ZenCase integration and automation work. Visit ele-ment.com to learn more.

About Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad

Derrevere Stevens Black & Cozad is a multi-state law firm based concentrating on complex civil litigation before State and Federal Courts at all trial and appellate levels. Principals, Jon Derrevere, Michael B. Stevens, Bryan W. Black, and Bart Cozad have over 100 years of combined experience as litigators handling insurance defense, insurance coverage matters, subrogation recovery, construction defects, premises liability, auto negligence, products liability, and real estate matters. Firm clients include many prominent professional and general liability carriers along with product manufacturers, distributors and retailers, as well as architects, engineers, general contractors and product suppliers. In addition to its insurance practice, the firm is focused on prosecuting and defending mass torts and class action cases.

