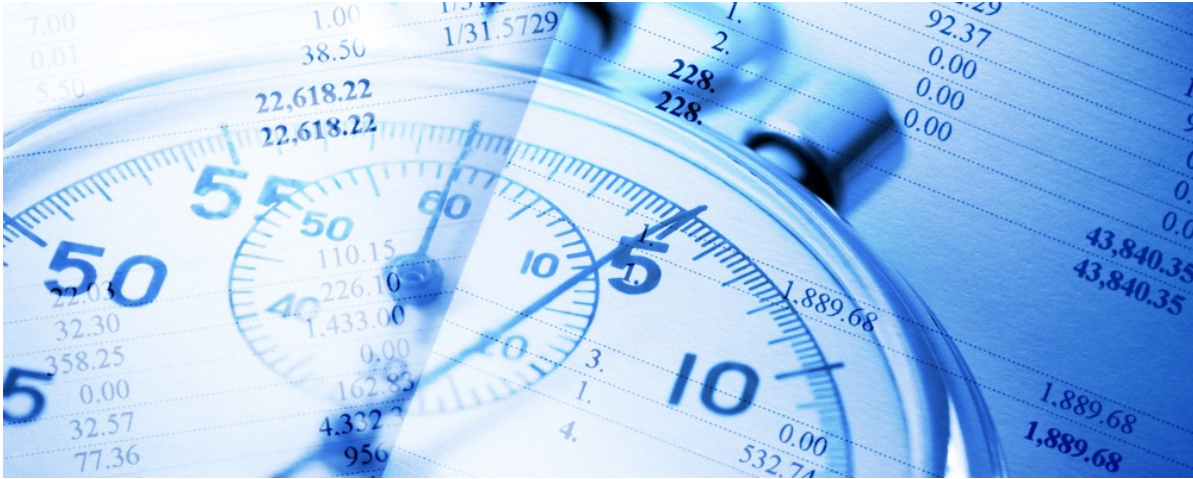




Seven Ways to Increase Billable Hours

The Reality of Tracking Time



Let's be honest. Tracking time and then generating invoices is the least fun part of being a lawyer or running a law firm. You went to law school to practice law, that's your passion. Yet without the essential task of tracking your time well, invoicing promptly and collecting money, there's no way to keep your practice going!

Can your firm honestly say it's collecting all the billable time possible? Clio's bombshell Legal Trends Report in September startled the industry by showing a dramatically lower number of billable hours as a percentage of hours worked than previously thought.

So how can your firm increase billable hours? [TimeSolv](#) has been providing billing and timekeeping software since 1999 and after talking with hundreds of law firms, we've developed seven best practices to consider to make sure every hour possible is captured and billed accordingly.

1. Create a documented time tracking policy

Write it down!



It's time to literally think about time as money for your firm. Breaking for a 90-minute lunch may be fine in your firm, but that's a \$350 expense that would probably need partner approval if you treated that time as money.

The answer is for your firm to establish a documented time policy. This policy should include the items we'll cover below. The simple exercise of writing down a policy can change the mentality and culture of your firm.

2. Establish a firewall between invoicing and time entry

Time entries should not be created while drafting invoices



Making sure all the billable time is entered should not happen at the end of each month when draft invoices are being created.

Ideally, you want to eliminate the time between actually working on a billable item and when the time entry is made. Establish a policy where time entries are reviewed and confirmed each week.

With this in mind, your billing admin person will not be rushing from one associate to another at the end of the month because one of the senior partner questions if all the billable time is on a pre-bill.

3. Enter all time by end of day

Create the expectation all time will be entered daily



A lot of associates will wait until maybe Friday afternoon at 5 p.m. to calculate and enter their time for the week. This ends up being a game of fill in the blanks as they try to get to the 40-hour mark.

By entering and checking their time at the end of each day, there's no need for the end of the week guessing game.

This may be the most important part of your time tracking policy as it will ensure extremely accurate time entries.

4. Capture ALL the time, not just billable time

Find the inefficiencies



This is one of those ways to really count time as money. If senior partners know where ALL the time has been spent, they can adjust and shift resources accordingly to maximize efficiency and use of time.

Perhaps there's an associate who's spending seven hours a week on a task that could be or should be handled by a non-billable employee.

5. Do review of missing time once a week

Know before billing if time is missing



Have we mentioned it's a good idea to separate time keeping from billing? Assign your billing person the job of reviewing every Monday the missing time from the previous week. It's easy to work with your timekeepers to rectify any time missing because there's very little time elapsed.

Often times, the first discrepancy on time missing comes when a partner is reviewing draft bills. This can often mean weeks have gone by since the work was done and lots of effort and (yes) time is wasted trying to track down the missing entry.

6. Close out the time entries every week

Show how serious you are about timekeeping



This is a super powerful way to make sure time is entered the day the work is completed. Your timekeeping software should allow you closeout each week so timekeepers don't have the option to modify or create time entries from the week before.

Everyone in your firm will fully understand how important time keeping is for the health of the organization with this policy in place.

7. Commission incentives

Create goals for your associates



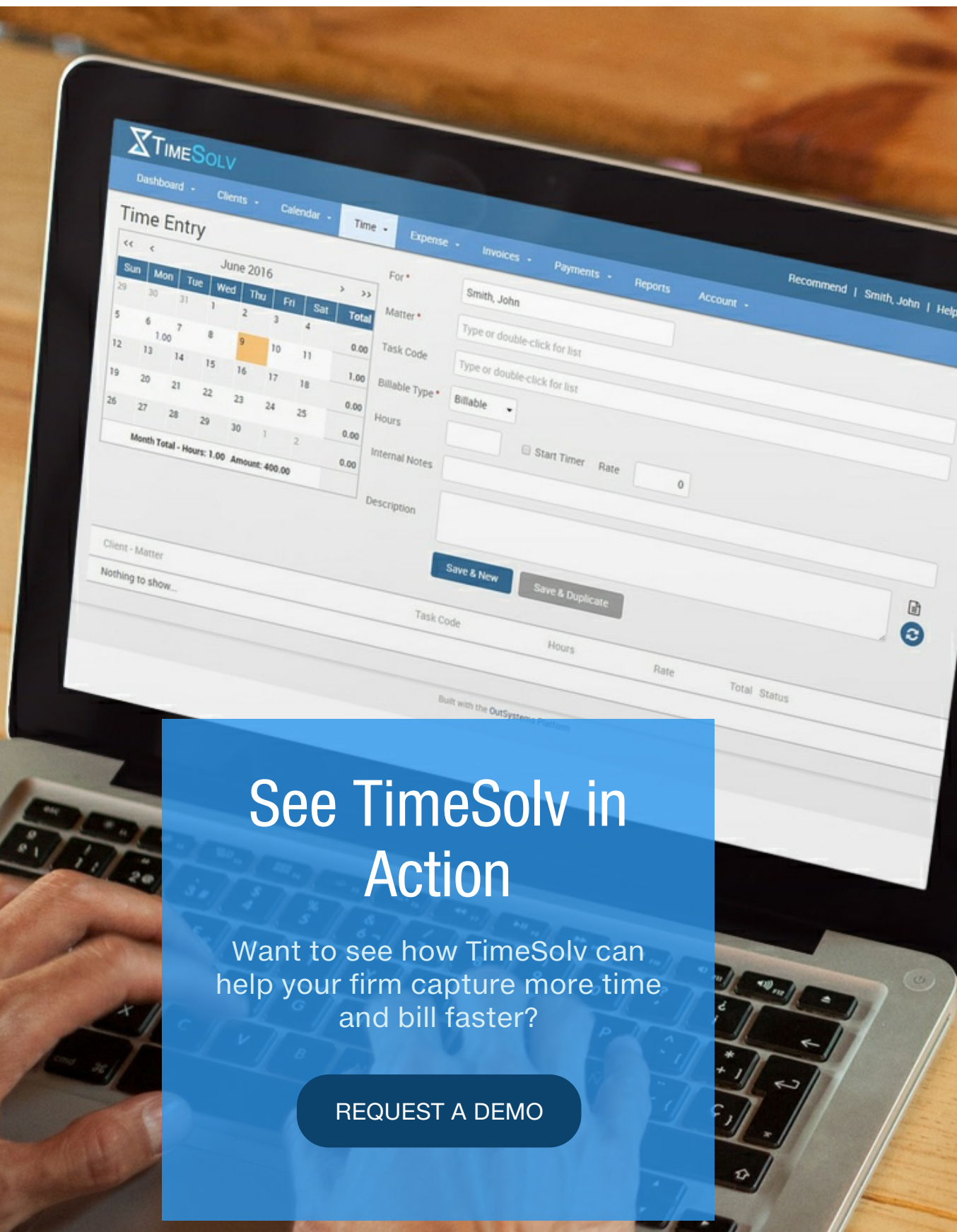
If your firm has this in place, pay your timekeepers based on a commission of funds received (and NOT just how much was billed).

When timekeepers know that their efforts to track time quickly and efficiently will affect their own paycheck, you'd be amazed how well they can become at this task!

Conclusion



It's time to shift the thinking on how time is considered for your law firm. Implementing these seven suggestions will go a long way in capturing more time and billing more efficiently, which in turn allows for more time to bill!



See TimeSolv in Action

Want to see how TimeSolv can help your firm capture more time and bill faster?

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