

Legal Services Cut Time on Notices by 50% with Column

Wilson, Brewer & Munson was recently asked to start using Column to place public notices with their newspaper of record. Thanks to Column, the law firm has reduced time spent on public notice by 50% and gained confidence that they are getting the best deals for their clients.

Arkansas City sits along the the southern border of Kansas, about an hour south of Wichita. The law firm Wilson, Brewer & Munson, PA has offices on Summit Street — just a few blocks from the Cowley CourierTraveler, Arkansas City’s local newspaper.

Wilson, Brewer & Munson often publishes legal notices with the CourierTraveler. Whenever a law firm handles probate cases, for example, they are legally required to place a public notice in the local newspaper of record. At Wilson, Brewer & Munson, this responsibility falls on the shoulders of Keela Brewer.

Brewer has been placing public notices with the CourierTraveler for eight years. Given that Wilson, Brewer & Munson gets most of their business via word of mouth or foot traffic, and that they work just a few few blocks from the local newspaper, placing notices was relatively easy.

Even so, when the CourierTraveler announced that they were transitioning their public notice process to a new platform called Column, Brewer was open to trying out the new technology. Her existing process required typing up documents, communicating with the newspaper via email or phone and receiving invoices and affidavits in the mail. Brewer appreciated the paper’s initiative to modernize.

“We switched our public notices to running through Column to improve the publication experience for our customers and transition into a more efficient system overall,” said CourierTraveler publisher David Allen Seaton. After making the transition, Brewer saw immediate benefits from using the Column platform.

Simplicity

What first struck Brewer about Column’s platform was its simplicity. Column replaces the complex, sometimes frustrating public notice placement process with an easy-to-navigate dashboard. Despite its intuitive appearance, however, Column also gives Brewer deeper insight into the publication process — which increases her peace of mind.

When she drafts a notice, Brewer can see the paper’s ad deadlines and trust that her notice will be run on time. After publication, Brewer can easily log back into Column to download the affidavit and upload it via e-filing to her local county court. With all relevant information and documents in one place, Brewer feels like she has a better grasp of the entire process.

Transparency

Sadly, the occasional miscommunication happens in the world of legals. Brewer has seen some notices formatted poorly, or displayed in a way that didn’t match her expectations. Sometimes, notices turn out to be more expensive than she anticipated.

With Column, Brewer no longer has to worry. During placement, Column provides a proof that shows exactly what the notice will look like when it runs in print. Brewer commented, “I appreciate seeing the proof before submitting the notice, because I’m able to make sure the legal looks great.”

If the newspaper makes changes to the notice after submission, Brewer gets an email with the updated proof. Through Column’s real-time price calculator, Brewer also gains insight into how much a notice will cost, and she can make copy and formatting changes through the platform to how the price adjusts.

Brewer said that seeing how her edits affect price has helped her understand the most efficient way to format notices, always making sure she gets the best deals for her clients. Given the money she saves by formatting, Brewer said “the processing fee is totally worth it.”

Time Savings

Column’s added simplicity and transparency lead to immediate time savings for Brewer. She has seen a 50% decrease in the time she spends filing public notices. This frees her up to do other tasks and focus on her clients.

Even though the CourierTraveler is right down the street, Brewer usually needed to communicate with the newspaper throughout the publication process. Column reduces that back-and-forth emailing and calling by keeping Brewer and the newspaper on the same page. Through the platform, Brewer can submit a notice, see a proof, pay a bill and download her affidavit in less than five total minutes. And she can do so at any time, any day of the week.

Standardization

Sometimes, however, Brewer places notices with newspapers other than the CourierTraveler. She said that in a perfect world, she could log into Column to handle *all* of her legal notices — even if they aren’t in her usual paper.

“Sometimes it is very difficult placing a notice with a newspaper, because you have to go to try and find their website, look up their phone number, talk to them on the phone and they’ll ask you to email it to them with specific criteria. I wish I could simply place all of my legals through this portal,” Brewer said.

With Column, Brewer just has to select the newspaper she wants to publish her notice and execute one easy, standardized process. If every newspaper were on the platform, placing a public notice would always be that simple.