

Amicus Attorney Gavel & Gown Software

Amicus Attorney is a software application specifically designed for managing the myriad of interrelated information that permeates the practice of law. By providing a means that inherently cross-ties information related to clients, cases, things to do and appointments entered on an electronic calendar, case management and, indeed, law office management becomes a reality. In addition, Amicus introduces automation opportunities based upon predefined case types, such as divorce involving the parent-child relationship, patent prosecution in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, or defense of an accused felon in state court. For a particular case type, a series of time-sequenced events may be predefined with concomitant form-documents. The specific values applicable to a particular case are automatically inserted by Amicus and, voila, case-specific documents are generated virtually hands-free.

The strength of Amicus Attorney lies in its simplicity. While other similarly situated law office flavored applications may offer more functionality or more immediate access to information, Amicus' screen layouts are easy to learn and use on a routine basis. The Amicus initial screen consists of a picture of a law office, with a suitable background, and the name of the user. To make users feel comfortable with the Amicus desktop, such backgrounds as olive marble or leather or pastel paper may be selected. Similarly, the picture shown may be selected as having a fireplace, a modern look, or a comfort look. An office may be either an "Attorney Office" or a "Legal Assistant Office"; only an Amicus Attorney Office may schedule things to do and appointments on the calendar, may record contacts and make time entries. Obviously, the Attorney Office affords maximal flexibility (at a modest price).

To input case information, the File feature is invoked. A short file name is first defined so that a case file may be quickly and conveniently retrieved. Next, the client and matter names are entered, along with client and matter ID's, and billing logistics. Then, on a comfortably designed second screen, the client and referral contacts are defined, along with the client's business type, the file type, and whether reminders and warnings should be posted on the daily calendar if there have been a paucity of time entries or if the matter has unduly aged. By being defined through the File feature, contacts are automatically tied back to the case file. Appointments and to do's should also be preferably entered while the user is within the case file for automatic cross-tie purposes. Two custom screens per file type (with custom fields) may be defined to supplement the standard two screens.

The Contact feature allows entry of information for office, home, and "other." Notes may be made for each contact, but such notes are, unfortunately, not automatically date-stamped. Again, with Amicus' inherent cross-tie capability, all of the case files, to do's, appointments, or telephone contacts associated with this contact may be readily determined. The built-in Phone Call screen enables calls to be timed and notes to be taken; call-back reminders and time entries may also be made.

The Calendar feature tracks events — appointments or to do's — and relates such events back to case files and contacts, and attorneys too, if appropriate. To do's may be prioritized and with deadlines and notes being shown. Events may be displayed on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. A "Today" button allows an immediate return to a display of the current day.

From an operational vantage point, Amicus Attorney seamlessly functions on a network under its "Team" feature. Offices may communicate with each other by using "sticky notes" which are pasted

onto a corner of the recipients' screen. Significantly, the underlying Amicus database is rock-solid. This is critical for trouble-free operations atop such frail platforms as Windows 95. For example, after a system crash occurs and the user is compelled to restart Windows 95, Amicus Attorney presents a concise notice that it was not shut down properly and then chugs ahead as if nothing happened. This impeccable reliability is hard to beat, and, of course, is crucial especially on a network. Amicus is also integrated into the WordPerfect Legal Edition as Corel Amicus Attorney.

While providing the capability to generate time records in user-selected formats, Amicus does not have a billing or accounting feature. Nevertheless, seamless interfaces are provided for such superb applications as Time Slips and PC Law. For organizing the plethora of information that routinely permeates the law office and for enabling this information to be cross-tied for immediate access, Amicus Attorney is a major player.