eStatePlanner
by Hull & Hull LLP

Case Study

Founder: Colleen Peffers
Firm: Peffers Law
Founded: July 2012
Practice Areas: Estate and Legacy Planning
Estate Litigation
Estate Administration
Corporate
Location: Milton, Ontario

Colleen is a sole practitioner who introduced e-State Planner to her practice to remove manual data entry out of the estate planning process. Not only was she able to cut back on data entry, she saw her profit margins increase and overall client experience drastically improve. Here's how she did it.

- Draft simple and complex documents in seconds
- Precedents from Hull & Hull LLP
- Eliminate typographical errors
- Improved client experience and mutual understanding

Peffers Law is a boutique firm, located in Milton, Ontario and owned by Colleen Peffers, CPA, CMA, JD. The firm mostly services corporate clients, but since the start of COVID-19, they have seen an increase in their Wills and Estates practice. The boutique firm has just two staff to manage day-to-day operations and client services. Colleen has always had an interest in using new technologies to increase her practice efficiencies and is consistently looking for new and innovative ways to improve the client experience. A typical month for Colleen usually involves estate legacy planning for 5-10 families Knowing that the Will drafting process can be both stressful and time consuming, she was looking for alternative solutions to help with her firm's workload.

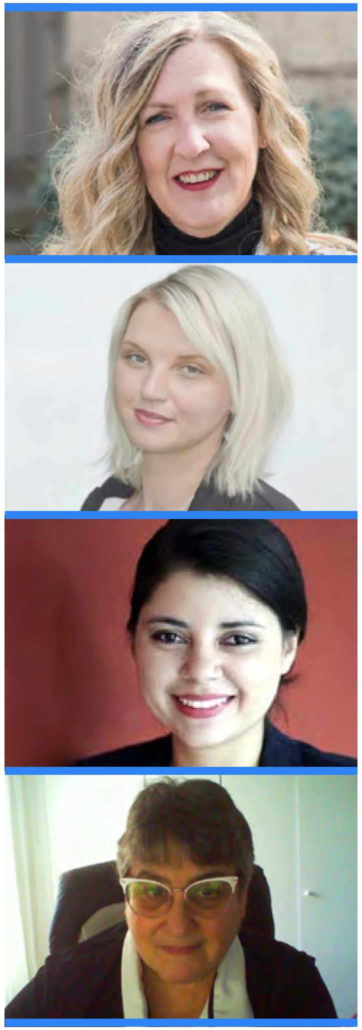
Feedback from clients at Peffers Law is that they are satisfied with the initial meeting, but when they receive their completed estate planning documents, they had difficulty understanding the legalese. Far too much time was spent explaining the documents to the client and how those documents integrated the instructions from the initial meeting. There is a disconnect between the work that was done to bring the plan to life and the understanding of the finished product. Colleen wanted to fix this issue and find a solution to improve the understanding of complex concepts. The amount of time drafting behind the scenes was more than the amount spent in front of the client. Colleen wanted to spend the time with her clients getting to know them and understanding how best she could help improve their life and legacy.

Peffers Law Will drafting process and estate law practice before e-State Planner:

Typically, before software, Colleen would send her clients an intake questionnaire and would be focused on the different types of assets which made up the client's financial profile. She would have a meeting to cover the assets and ensure she's captured them all correctly. She would then move on to the drafting process, Colleen says, "I then draft with my precedent I've built up over the years. I usually use the most recent Will and use that as my base for new clients, because there was never a standard precedent. If I haven't yet encountered a certain scenario or clause I would then research on the internet to find the best wording for it" - often Colleen would end up at the Hull & Hull LLP website.

Colleen discovered e-State Planner when she was attending a Halton County Law Association Continuing Professional Development Seminar and Jordy was demonstrating the software after the seminar. As a person with a perpetual interest in learning new technologies, Colleen asked to learn more and agreed to become an early Beta user at the time. "We thought this may be able to help us reduce potential litigation files."

Once e-State Planner was introduced into Peffers Law estate practice, things started to change. They saw an immediate decrease in drafting time, and the



Colleen and her team (Chrystal, Nancy and Nancy-Dale) have streamlined their processes and made more time for their clients thanks to eState Planner.

complete elimination of copy and pasting from previous documents. They were able to tap into the knowledge and experience of Hull & Hull LLP precedents and clauses. This cut down on the time to develop and perfect language of clauses in scenarios they had yet to encounter with clients. This decrease in drafting time gets reinvested into time with the client, understanding their issues, needs and desires.

Having the client enter data directly into the software meant that spelling mistakes in names were eliminated completely. It gives the client some ownership in the process as well. Not having to transcribe information multiple times also eliminated typographical errors and saved further time. Intake meetings became more effective because all the key data had been entered and more time could be focused on validating the information, rather than taking notes down during the meeting. The process is better for the client, which in turn makes the process better for Peffers Law. The end product is standardized across the firm, meaning there is no variability regardless of who creates the Estate Planning documents.

“We are able to give our clients a great product at an even better price point.” Colleen says.

Because intake meetings have shifted from data entry and transcription to more of a casual conversation, Colleen was able to dive deeper into her clients desires and identify any problems or issues for her clients, resulting in more time being able to help and advise them accordingly.

“There’s much more of a conversation and process involved to ask what the client actually wants. Because we’re not taking notes in the meeting it’s a far more interactive conversation.” Colleen elaborates, “Depending on what the client says, I can go down a more detailed path, to find out more about something they’re concerned about. For example, whether a child is estranged from them, or if they have a cottage property, but they never want it to be sold and they don’t know how to set up enough money to keep the cottage in the family forever. It’s like sitting down for coffee and figuring out how best to identify and address their issues.”

Along with a conversation centered around advice and problem solving, Colleen was able to spend more one-on-one time with the client. This ultimately creates deeper relationships. In addition, the client also has a clearer understanding of the time required to plan their legacy and produce their legacy documents. The time expended on a client file shifted from backhouse drafting to client facing.

"I'm able to show more value in front of the client because I am present in the moment with them, versus doing more behind the scenes. It's all billable hours, it's just the clients see more face time which means they know where their money is spent. My time is better spent helping through an advisory lens versus transcribing and drafting. My job is to give legal advice."

Most clients come in believing all they need is a "simple Will". With the increased time spent with the client, they begin to understand how many issues must be considered, even in what, to a client, looks like a very simple situation. That's where e-State Planner can literally show them the impact of various options.

At the end of the meeting, the client receives e-State Planner's graphic and text summaries of what was discussed so they can easily understand what's in their Will and estate documents. The review process becomes much more simplified as Colleen and her client are using the same tools to review.

"My client is happy because they understand what's in their Will in a visual format. There's no ambiguity from when we leave from one meeting to the next, we're aligned, and we know exactly what's going into the Will and estate documents. I no longer have to worry about missing anything during the entire planning process."

In conclusion, e-State Planner has also allowed Colleen to reduce the amount of time she keys in data, which reduced the chances of human error. With a click of a button, changes can be made and estate planning documents can be redrafted if the client has a different vision with any aspect of the plan. This enables her better business margins because it takes Colleen minutes to make any changes to the plan, rather than hours. Because software dynamically creates the estate planning documents and inputs the information from the estate plan, it cuts down on many of the common issues in estate plan drafting such as spelling client names incorrectly, typos and incorrect asset amounts. e-State Planner has made a monumental difference in Colleen's process and ability to build a valuable practice run as a sole practitioner.