



Gary Lewis

N. Kane Bennett and David Benoit are longtime friends who created a firm based on their complementary business and technology legal backgrounds and their strong belief in leveraging technology to create a more efficient law practice.

For New Firm, The Future Is In The Clouds

Founders hope technology focus makes practice 'swift and efficient'

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By DOUGLAS S. MALAN

As attorneys N. Kane Bennett and David Benoit saw it, the time had come to take the next step in developing new ways to practice law. Lunchtime discussions between the longtime friends always gravitated toward how the practice was developing and how they could create a quicker and more efficient operation.

"We had the same ideas about where the practice of law is headed," said Bennett, who most recently practiced at Raymond & Bennett in Glastonbury. "We wanted to maximize our use of technology in the setup of the law office to help lawyers and clients." So Bennett and Benoit joined forces to create Aeton Law Partners in Middletown, where they have been operating out of an eco-friendly office in the Centerpoint Connecticut complex for the past three weeks.

Bennett brings his practice of civil litigation and general counsel services in the areas of business, employment, insurance and technology. Before joining Bennett, Benoit had been a solo attorney in West Hartford after several

years working in-house for The Hartford. He brings experience in transactional work related to business, technology and intellectual property. One of his recent projects was representing a large investment management company in a \$50 million purchase of a comprehensive asset management software system.

“There aren’t too many Connecticut firms, or any at all, that are devoted to business and technology practices,” Bennett said. “It’s a good niche.”

And the name fits the mission. Aeton comes from Greek mythology and means “swift and efficient,” Bennett noted.

That starts with their approach to practice management. Bennett came from a firm that embraced a system where files were not paper-based but stored electronically. The next step is to follow other businesses’ lead by moving network operations online, or “in the cloud,” where all aspects of an operation can be accessed anywhere at any time.

“Everything we use in practice management is web-based,” said Bennett. “We realized that provides an inexpensive, secure and flexible practice management system with mobility and functionality. We like to say we’re on the ground and in the clouds.”

That also allows the firm to avoid billable hours and be more flexible with its pricing because of their lower costs. This caters to business clients who are scrutinizing the bottom line and what they pay for legal services.

“Clients are demanding a change in the way lawyers practice, and people in the business community, especially technology businesses, are expecting lawyers to operate the same way they do,” Benoit said.

Virtual Paralegals and Associates

Aeton Law Partners has embraced other emerging tech trends in the industry, too, such as the use of virtual paralegals. The firm contracts with U.S.-based paralegals to handle their administrative work from remote locations where they’re connected to Aeton Law Partners’ cloud network.

As the firm grows beyond Bennett and Benoit, there are also plans to hire Connecticut-based virtual associates, some on contract and some full time, who will practice law in the same manner.

“There’s really no reason to come into the office,” Benoit said. “We’re able to offer attorneys more flexible options when they have responsibilities at home. We have the ability to collaborate online in real time through instant messaging or web conferencing using these secure business tools from reputable vendors.”

Their new system already is paying off. Bennett is in the middle of a case in California court that deals with theft of confidential proprietary information involving companies from Connecticut, Florida, California and India. Bennett is collaborating with a West Coast law firm as well as experts from Georgia, New York and California.

“We all have access to the materials involved in this case,” Bennett said. “We don’t have to do any ground mailing of documents. For a case like this, this system is really advantageous.”