

Banner Witcoff goes from on premises to leading edge with iManage Cloud

Intellectual property law leaders satisfy more clients by freeing lawyers to work seamlessly and IT to innovate



Industry:

- Legal

Headquarters:

- Chicago, US

iManage footprint:

- iManage Work 10 in the Cloud
- iManage Threat Manager
- iManage Security Policy Manager
- iManage Records Manager

Leaders in intellectual property law for 100 years, Banner Witcoff operates four offices located strategically across the US. The firm was considering upgrading its legacy, on-premises document management system. As long-time iManage customers who had not yet embraced iManage Work 10 in the Cloud, that was one option. The board challenged the firm's incoming Chief Technology Officer to shed his bias for the cloud and weigh it fairly against keeping document management on premises. He took up that challenge and proved both to himself and to firm leadership that moving to the cloud-native iManage platform would prove the most beneficial for the business, its clients, and its workers.

Banner Witcoff are the trusted IP partner of choice for organizations around the world. The firm's attorneys provide sound legal guidance and inventive IP solutions to start-ups, Fortune 500 companies, and everything in between — clients of all sizes and across all sectors. The tagline "Protecting IP. Propelling business." directly reflects Banner Witcoff's brand promise.



I'm a big fan of moving all those on-premises headaches out to the cloud and trusting iManage to keep things up and running. That lets me sleep at night."

Bill Siskoff

Chief Technology Officer, Banner Witcoff



Business outcomes:

- Requires minimal IT admin
- Work better, work smarter
- Automates governance
- Up-to-date security protocols
- Future options like AI

The business challenge

Evaluate the options

As early adopters of the iManage document management system, Banner Witcoff was still running the legacy application (DeskSite) on premises when Bill Siskoff joined the firm as its Chief Technology Officer. His top priority coming into the role was to analyze the existing technology, evaluate the firm's options, and recommend next steps for the firm to update and improve the work experience. One issue that the firm particularly wanted his guidance on was whether to keep document management on premises or move to the cloud.

Attorneys handle a lot of documents, regardless of the type of law they practice. As an IP firm, Banner Witcoff has its share of large-scale documents and emails going back and forth between attorneys and clients. Siskoff says freeing up the hardware space and Exchange workload were significant drivers for moving to the cloud. Having an always-on environment where people can work with and transfer documents at will without bloating the infrastructure is pivotal for the firm's productivity.

Siskoff's previous employer had been an early adopter of Work 10 in the iManage Cloud, moving from OpenText/eDocs in February of 2020, just before everything shut down due to COVID-19.

"There's no way my former firm could have gone through the pandemic with the on-prem solution we'd replaced, so that was a lifesaver," says Siskoff. He adds that the firm's timely shift enabled everybody to work seamlessly from home for as long as needed. "It was part harrowing experience, part amazing journey, but it turned out great in the end. So, I'm a big fan of moving all those on-premises headaches out to the cloud and trusting iManage to keep things up and running. That lets me sleep at night."

Make the case for cloud

Siskoff's past experience told him cloud was the right way to go, but the board challenged him to justify his opinion, so he put the time in to do the required analysis. He looked at what it takes to keep the on-premises infrastructure up and running, the cost and maintenance, and he compared that with the cloud, considering the pros and cons of both.

Looking only at the numbers, he said that cloud isn't cheaper than staying on premises. But looking holistically and comparing the benefits of being in the cloud versus on prem, cloud takes the lead. "You have the servers, the infrastructure, all that entails. The sleepless nights of wondering, will these servers still be up in the morning? You weigh that against having someone else, like iManage, worry about all that. iManage makes sure our content is always available, 24/7. iManage data is hosted in Microsoft Azure, which always has the latest security protocols."

Siskoff remarks that no one understands the time and effort that IT puts into maintaining on-premises systems and their back-end processes until they don't do it, and things can go south very quickly. By transferring that responsibility to iManage Cloud, IT can save countless hours and focus on advancing the business instead of acting as administrators, keeping its servers online. When he presented his findings to the board, they agreed.

"At the end of the day," says Siskoff, "iManage Work 10 in the Cloud stood out to us as the winning play."



Everyone uses iManage. We encourage practice leads, attorneys, and paralegals to use it right from the start."

Bill Siskoff

Chief Technology Officer,
Banner Witcoff



Start in iManage and work in iManage, and you're done. You won't forget to move it later."

Bill Siskoff

Chief Technology Officer,
Banner Witcoff

The solution

Work better, work smarter, start with iManage

Siskoff's philosophy is, let's get more out of the tools we have. Let the systems do the work for us. Stop working so hard. Work smarter. There's nothing more frustrating in a technology role than people not using what's available. There is this cool tool out there that's just not being utilized. Let's use them.

"Everyone uses iManage," says Siskoff. "We encourage practice leads, attorneys, and paralegals to use it right from the start."

Siskoff says it's all part of the journey. Sometimes people get caught in their old habits and save something to their desktop. So they foster the idea that this is how you work better, this is how you work smarter. Just start here. "Start in iManage and work in iManage, and you're done. You won't forget to move it later," he concludes.

Make governance automatic

Security underpins everything at a law firm. But for attorneys, paralegals, and secretaries, it's not their primary focus — clients are. That's why tools like iManage Security Policy Manager, iManage Threat Manager, and iManage Records Manager are so beneficial to IT, for whom security IS a primary focus. "With these applications, we can let people think about the details of their matters," says Siskoff, "not security and governance."

Governance policies differ by jurisdiction and change continually; it is challenging for anyone to follow them. "But iManage tools enable us to make governance automatic." They create workspaces with specific security sets and let Security Policy Manager enforce the ethical walls and governance requirements. "Our job is to help our clients succeed," he adds. "That's hard work, intellectual work, and managing a document management system is not our focus. I say let the tools or the systems do that work: let iManage do it."

The business outcomes

Clients appreciate structure and organization

Siskoff warns that without a document management system, the potential for chaos and having documents saved everywhere is very real. Law firm clients appreciate structure and organization and want to have confidence that they're seeing the latest version. He encourages small firms to get their content into a documentation system that will scale with them and take steps to ensure that people are using it.

"You can always benefit from the structure of a document management system, no matter what size your firm is," says Siskoff. "Start with that structure from the beginning and build your data as you go." He adds that when you wait until you get to a point where it is all too obvious that you need it, it's not too late, but it's more painful. "I've done software development throughout my career, and in my experience, the project grows more challenging the longer you wait."

Siskoff says it's going to take some time for the firm to take advantage of all the tools they'll gain by moving to iManage Work 10 in the Cloud.





"We're very excited to use iManage co-authoring," he says. Lawyers go through so much effort checking documents in and out, emailing documents back and forth. "To be able to have anyone go into that document at any time and work on it and know that iManage Work is keeping track of who did what, when — that's revolutionary for us. It's a game changer."

"I'm very confident Banner Witcoff made the right decision to go with iManage Cloud," asserts Siskoff.

Looking ahead

Moving to iManage Cloud opens a whole world of future possibilities that Siskoff looks forward to, especially for using artificial intelligence. "AI is definitely on the roadmap for us," he says. "We are excited for the whole iManage journey."



We're very excited to use iManage co-authoring. To have anyone work in that document and to later know who did what, when — that's revolutionary for us."

Bill Siskoff

Chief Technology Officer, Banner Witcoff

About iManage™

iManage is dedicated to Making Knowledge Work™. Our cloud-native platform is at the center of the knowledge economy, enabling every organization to work more productively, collaboratively, and securely. Built on more than 30 years of industry experience, iManage helps leading organizations manage documents and emails more efficiently, protect vital information assets, and leverage knowledge to drive better business outcomes. As your strategic business partner, we employ our award-winning AI-enabled technology, an extensive partner ecosystem, and a customer-centric approach to provide support and guidance you can trust to make knowledge work for you. iManage is relied on by more than one million professionals at 4,000 organizations around the world. Visit www.imanage.com to learn more.