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ABI DOCUMENT SUPPORT SERVICES





ABI

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“Ending the Records Runaround”

By Susan Cushing

Few things are more inspiring than a tale of someone bravely embarking on a new business venture, sacrificing, toiling and pouring their heart, soul and resources into a vision, perhaps only they can see, to ultimately achieve that all too elusive American Dream. It's what makes Hollywood salivate, and all of us feel a little more optimistic about our own dreams.



Our Professional Service of the Year is just such a story. Today, ABI Document Support Services is the largest nationwide provider of records retrieval and document management for the legal and insurance industries. But their story begins more than three decades ago, when a young wife and mother became one of California’s first licensed female private investigators. It was 1981, when Alice Bengé launched her new enterprise, Alice Bengé Investigations, better known as ABI.

With two growing sons, Alice grew her blossoming business from her own home. When necessary, she sometimes recruited the help of other moms she knew, who arrived with their own kids in tow, to pitch in. They worked around the kitchen

table until the company grew too large and they had to move to professional offices.

One of the more complicated aspects of her new business, and essential to settling many of her cases, was the retrieval of medical records. Even today, with speed-of-light communications and the advent of digital recordkeeping, such an endeavor is more complicated than one might assume. But three decades ago, pre-tech-boom, it was even more so. Record retrieval is a complex, time-consuming and costly process for an individual or business, but Alice, being the entrepreneur she was, made it look easy. As a result, ABI quickly earned a reputation for fast, reputable and accurate services and her client list grew exponentially.

Since those modest beginnings,

ABI has developed technology and processes that significantly streamline the entire records retrieval process, becoming an industry leader in records retrieval services and technology.

FAMILY TIES

The second chapter of this story began in 1990, when Alice’s sons, David and Jason, joined the company. According to David, it was a move born of necessity.

“A large organization came to ABI with a substantial records retrieval project,” he says. “My mother asked me to take that over. In doing so, I could tell rather quickly, that there was a real opportunity in the retrieval space. There was a consistency in the potential amount of work to be



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had, significantly less liability, and a very strong, recurring revenue model. Most importantly, there appeared to be a real need.”

Based upon these observations and recommendations, the company, while still remaining primarily an investigations firm, gradually grew the business of records retrieval in response to an ever-growing demand. This dual-business model remained in place for another 10 years, until 2000, when David was named president of ABI and assumed the day-to-day operations, and the company officially became ABI Document Support Services.

“One of the first things we did, with agreement, of course, was eliminating the private investigative services,” says David, “so we could really focus on records retrieval. At the time, we were probably doing about \$3 million in revenue. Once we made the switch, the business began growing by \$1 million to \$3 million per year.”

But that was just the beginning. Leveraging his accrued knowledge and experience, David began exploring and implementing industry-changing technology and strategies. Infusing the com-

pany with both his enthusiasm and vision, ABI continues to grow with each successive year. By providing an innovative, streamlined delivery and review system, they offer substantial cost and time savings for clients. The numbers speak for themselves, with an impressive 98 percent client retention rate.

“Everything we’ve done is part of our ongoing effort to provide faster, more efficient and affordable services that will have a direct and positive impact on client satisfaction and long-term client retention,” says David.

ADDED VALUE

For those outside the legal or insurance industries, record retrieval services might sound like an almost one-of-a-kind niche business, with little competition. Quite the contrary. There are literally hundreds who offer services similar to ABI. Similar, but not quite the same. So, what is the difference?

“Four years ago, we developed eSummary, a proprietary, record review software that we deliver to our clients with the record retrieval,” explains David. “With the introduction of that, we really started taking off.”

This creates incredible added value to ABI clients who, once their records are uploaded, have the ability to review documents in print or in a digital format, in chronological order and organized by document type. From a simple-to-use, streamlined order entry form to the proprietary direct records feeds, ABI’s integrated claims and legal records management tools continue to innovate and raise the bar for cost-effective records retrieval, analysis and summarization. These integrated technology offerings are created by their own, U.S. IT and legal support teams who offer extensive experience in the insurance and legal marketplace.

The little “kitchen table” business has really exploded over the past several years. Now a full-service, one-stop-shop in records retrieval and document management, ABI clients benefit from an advanced and more efficient records retrieval process, online records ordering, tracking, and electronic records review and client generated summarization with eSummary.

COAST-TO-COAST CONVENIENCE

ABI employs the largest network of field agents with sustained, long-term custodian relationships. This team is supported by dedicated field schedulers allowing ABI to provide unrivaled, excellent records retrieval in all 50 states. Additionally, their expert team facilitates a seamless onboarding experience for national, regional and local clients.

In order to service national insurance carriers with offices and claims throughout the United States, ABI, through its compliance team, reviews and creates programs that meet the requirements of varying state, local and regional laws and expectations.

Anyone who has ever dealt with any type of records knows the sheer volume of paper involved. Retrieval is really only the beginning. Upon receiving these mounds of documents, someone must now sift through, organize and pull pertinent information. A colossal task involving considerable time and, ultimately, cost.

“When ordering records from ABI, you can customize the experience to your preferences,” David says. “Log in any-

time to review the live order status details or elect to have updates sent automatically via email.”

Adjusters and law firms find this particularly helpful, with savings in both time and money. They can order records online with the order-tracking dashboard, then review and summarize uploaded records with ABI’s proprietary document management tool.

Additionally, ABI offers personalized support services with dedicated account executive and client relations teams who listen, understand and respond to client needs. Their industry expertise combined with a vast knowledge of regional legal requirements make ABI the top industry, go-to experts.

Every business is concerned with the bottom line, and ABI has responded to this by providing the best value for records retrieval and document management in the industry. By taking on tasks such as preparing and serving subpoenas and notices, cutting checks for witness fees, and following up with facili-

ties, ABI reduces their client’s out-of-pocket expenses and legal costs associated with records retrieval. This allows their clients to use their own in-house staff time to focus on more critical, higher value tasks.

“It’s not boasting when I say that I truly believe that ABI’s Web portal is the easiest and most complete records management tool available to place orders, track real-time order status, view records, securely download records, and organize, make notes and create summaries of medical records,” David says with confidence.

His mother’s son, David not only inherited her entrepreneurial spirit, he took her dream and amplified it with his own. Numbers never lie, and last month alone, the ABI team produced 46,859 record requests.

Attorney at Law Magazine’s Professional Service of the Year Award honors a forward-looking legal-support company that best reflects the values of excellence in the pursuit of customer satisfaction.

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