



Philips Dictation Systems

# User Case



## Lawrence & Wightman Benefit from Digital Dictation

**Founded in 1896 Lawrence & Wightman is one of the longest established firms of chartered surveyors in the UK. The company serves both corporate and individual clients within the Birmingham area, offering advice on an array of business and residential properties.**

### BACKGROUND

The company has six fee earners, who carry out a variety of professional work (including surveys) on the company's behalf. One of the authors is often on the road for several days at time, while the other five are based at the main office, but visit customer sites on a daily basis. As such, recording property details using dictation devices for transcription by the company's four secretaries has long been an integral way of doing business for Lawrence & Wightman.

In July 2005, the company abandoned its historic dependence on analogue, cassette-based recording devices after a meeting with Philips Master Digital Centre - GB Copiers Limited. Following a consultation with Mark Cramb, GB's digital dictation specialist, out went the tape recorders and in came six Digital Pocket Memos from Philips Dictation Systems, accompanied by four Philips transcription kits. In the space of less than one working day, Lawrence & Wightman went from analogue to digital, boosting long-term productivity rates for authors and secretaries alike.

### OPPORTUNITY

As with any professional practice, Lawrence & Wightman sometimes found itself short-staffed when the company's hardworking secretarial team was hit by illness. With each secretary receiving between two and seven tapes a day from each author, workloads would quickly build up. On such occasions, secretaries would have to attach sticky notes to tapes with priority instructions for transcription purposes. When the sticky notes fell off, the transcription team was left confused, unsure of how long the tapes had been sitting there.

Lawrence & Wightman also suffered from other disadvantages traditionally associated with analogue recording, including poor sound quality. Sometimes the sound quality was so bad, a survey would have to be re-recorded, resulting in further productivity losses. On other occasions, tapes would snap altogether, forcing the secretaries to waste yet more of their working day fixing their analogue cassettes.

### KEY ISSUES

- How to replace analogue, cassette-based dictation system
- How to increase workflow management
- How to improve dictation device reliability and voice file sound quality
- How to lower costs and increase productivity





The authors were also plagued by analogue annoyances. Tapes wear out as they re-record; they're easily lost in a glove compartment or cabinet drawer and they don't tell you when they're about to run out.

By the summer of 2005, Lawrence & Wightman partner Keith Chew and office manager Wendy Williams had come to the conclusion it was time to go digital.

## SOLUTION

Through his network of contacts, Keith Chew knew other chartered surveyors who had benefited from a Philips Dictation Systems solution supplied by GB Copiers Limited. Lawrence & Wightman had relied on Philips analogue dictation technology for years, so had little hesitation using the company to help it move from analogue to digital in a bid to boost dictation productivity.

In July 2005 six Philips Digital Pocket Memo systems and four transcription kits arrived at the chartered surveyor's Birmingham office. GB spent time training all the staff involved in the transition and in a few hours, both the secretarial and authoring teams were up and running with their new digital dictation recorders.

Since then, sticky notes have become a thing of the past – each author saves their recordings in a folder on the Lawrence & Wightman network, with clear instructions regarding deadline delivery.

## RESULTS

The secretarial team is happier and more productive: better sound quality means quicker transcriptions and no more rewinding and listening to the dictation again and again.

Other productivity gains include fewer transcription mistakes, thanks to the improvement in recordings. And secretaries like seeing the exact length of the transcription they are going to undertake – they can start work on longer dictations in the morning or complete a short dictation before going home.

Authors no longer have to waste time searching for a spare tape. What's more, working relations between the two teams have improved: the secretaries receive their recordings in a clearer, more organised fashion and the authors get their transcriptions back faster than they could previously have imagined possible.

Lawrence & Wightman's on-the-road author can now e-mail his dictations into the office rather than turning up in person to empty his attaché case packed with ageing tapes.

## CONCLUSION

"The products work exactly as promised," said Keith Chew. As and when the company takes on new authors, a new Philips dictation device will be on the company's stationery shopping list.

"There is no way that Lawrence & Wightman would go back to analogue now that we have seen how much better the digital solution is," said Wendy Williams. "It has made our jobs so much easier."

## CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Superior sound quality providing quick and accurate transcription
- Document organisation greatly improved and better workflow management
- Increased productivity with authors being able work remotely with secretaries
- Greater reliability with robust dictation devices and accurate digital voice files
- Improved overall efficiency leading to lower costs and quicker document turnaround

