Transition: Running A Virtual Law Firm

BUYERS GUIDE: 2020 EDITION

Legal Tech
PUBLISHING

The Comprehensive Cloud-Based Phone Solution for Law Firms.

"We make it easy to communicate."

That is the mantra and way of life for the team at Dallas based Estech Systems (ESI), a phone solution provider for thousands of professional service businesses nationwide. With over 30 years of experience providing end-to-end phone and business solutions, the team at ESI has delivered over 450,000 installed systems with millions of phones deployed to date.

As law firms transition to the cloud, many are seeking phone solutions that are both reliable and able to function in any environment – at home, on the road or in the office. ESI is a reliable partner for law firm businesses because of their ability to deliver a quality product, customer experience and support.

What's most noteworthy about ESI's offering is that they are one of the only solution providers to design, manufacture and deploy their equipment. From phones that are both engineered in America and supported by a US-based team, in addition to an extensive cloud-based phone-hosting network and management solutions, ESI's turnkey solution is perfectly suited to modern day legal practices.

ESI Cloud-Based Law Firm Phone Solutions

If you've ever purchased a phone system, you may be aware of the laundry list of options you have to choose from for phones, manufacturers, call routing, features and more. To streamline the process, what follows is an overview of the most popular features you should consider in order to create a phone system that meets the needs of your law firm today and that will give you options to add or adjust in the future.

Customized for Every Role

When you engage with ESI, you select the number of phones and choose the features your team members need. Because ESI both designs and configures its own phones, each member of your firm can have a phone that is customized and programmed to meet their specific needs.

Web-Based Deployment, Administration and Management

For law firms that operate virtually, the best way to ensure call quality is to work with a provider who understands how to test, configure and deploy cloud-based phones that are used especially in a virtual work environment.

Unlike traditional phone solutions that require on-site installation, hardware and management, ESI implements award-winning VOIP phones powered and managed via a web-based dashboard. When your phones ship to you, they are fully configured and ready to use.

Firm-Wide ESI Console™ Dashboard

Once installed, users access a web-based personal dashboard where they can view their call history and contact lists, manage greetings, listen to voicemails (or read transcribed messages), listen to recorded calls, schedule video conferences, and see team members' availability and chat with them. You can also immediately determine if someone is on a current call, away from their desk, or available for phone transfers.

## Voicemail Options & Transcription

No matter where you are, you can receive an immediate notification of a missed call with a transcribed voicemail attached to an email message. Voicemail notifications are sent to one or more firm members based on the extension dialed and recipient preferences.

You can listen to voicemails and easily return their call from the web-based dashboard, mobile app, or physical phone. For web users, simply click once to return a voicemail call. Forward voicemail messages to one or more colleagues or download and save the audio file for future reference. Delete a voicemail to remove it from the online portal and all devices where the ESI mobile app or softphone is installed. Advanced click-to-call functionality is available with ESI's Chrome extension that delivers seamless click-to-call options from within Gmail and Outlook Online (Office 365.)

Phone & Video Conferencing

Phone and video conferencing platforms are more popular than ever before. However, those solutions are vulnerable to cyber-attacks and raise security concerns for law firms. ESI's proprietary ESI Meet™ technology is encrypted and significantly more secure than public video conferencing applications, which is a true benefit when holding privileged conferences with clients and experts.

Another significant advantage of ESI's cloud-based phone solution is the ability to host secure meetings without the need for additional software. Video conferencing tools are built into the web-based dashboard and can be used from any
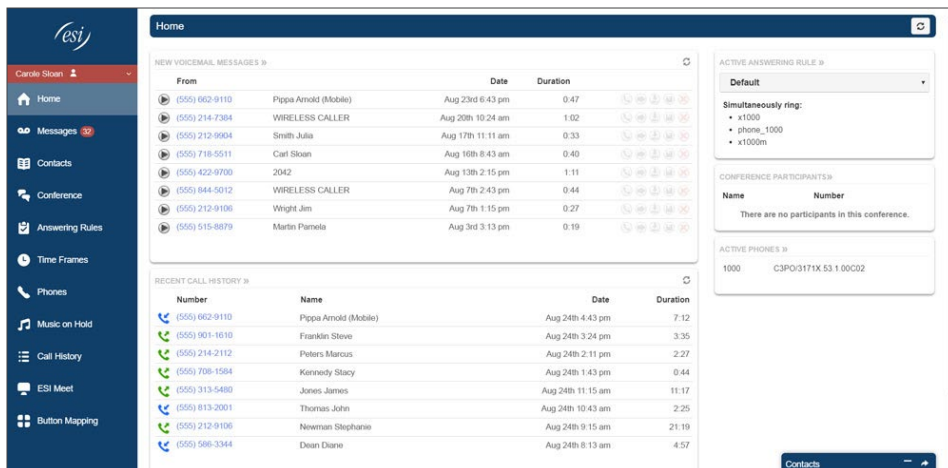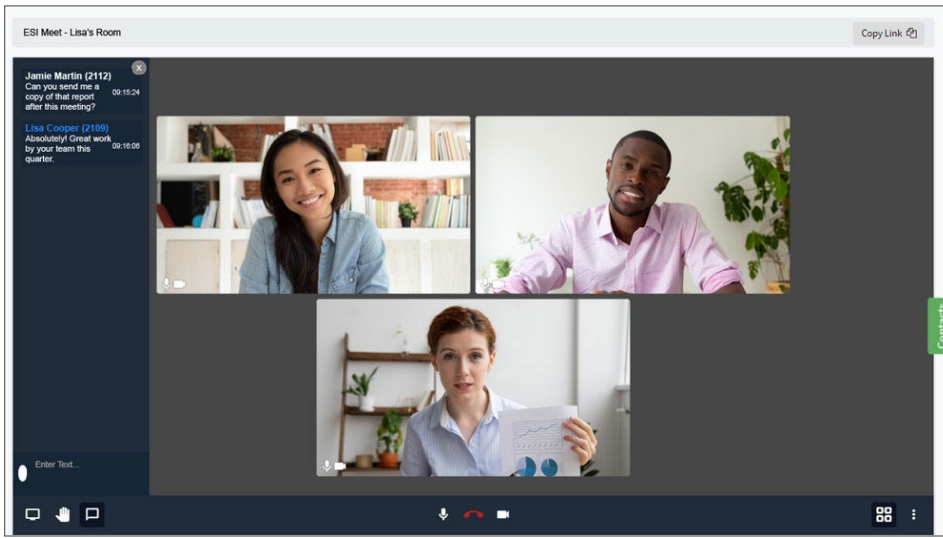
- Mute, add, park, or transfer calls to another firm member
- Conference call capabilities (up to 50 participants)
- Managing call forwarding preferences

Softphones
For team members who prefer to take calls from a laptop instead of their mobile device, ESI offers a softphone option called WebPhone. Users can make and receive calls in the same manner they would with a physical desk phone. Advanced functionality also includes video conferencing tools.

Physical Phones
Deploying a phone system during the time of COVID-19 can be extremely difficult. Only because ESI has total control over the production and the deployment of their cloud-based phone solutions are they able to both provide and ship pre-programmed phones to any location in the US within days.

laptop or tablet that has a built-in camera. For video conference meetings, you can view participants and invite additional attendees from the easy-to-use web-based dashboard. You can also access post-conference call reports to view call duration and details.

Text Messaging
A surge in text message communication between lawyers, staff and clients has driven the need for a secure solution. Leveraging ESI's built-in text message capabilities, law firms can upload or sync contact lists and they can message clients from a dedicated law firm number. By doing so, law firm communication policies are upheld, client communication is kept secure and administrative control is maintained even in the most challenging remote work environments.

Call Recording
For firms that would like to record and retain call records, ESI's platform is easy to use and a perfect fit for long-term archiving needs. Once calls are recorded, they can be played back or the audio files can be downloaded for review or storage. Bulk download is also available which can be particularly helpful when there is a need to search and download recordings from a specific number.

Answering Rules
Administrators and users can create answering rules that are specific to that user, team, or location. For example, a calendar can be created to reroute calls during set times, or forward them to a mobile app or ring other team members for handling.

Phone Types and Benefits
ePhoneGo™ is ESI's native mobile application for Android and iPhone devices. There has never been a time in history when people have found themselves to be more dependent on the ability to communicate from any location and with any device.

What ePhoneGo™ delivers is the ability to deploy an entire phone system remotely to your entire staff in a matter of days, including secure communications and text messages between staff and clients and all within one application. ePhoneGo's key features include:
- Receiving inbound calls from each user's dedicated business line
- Accessing all team members and contacts regardless of location
- View recent calls and history
- Transfer, hold or record calls as if you were in the office
- Connecting to a Bluetooth device of choice such as a headset
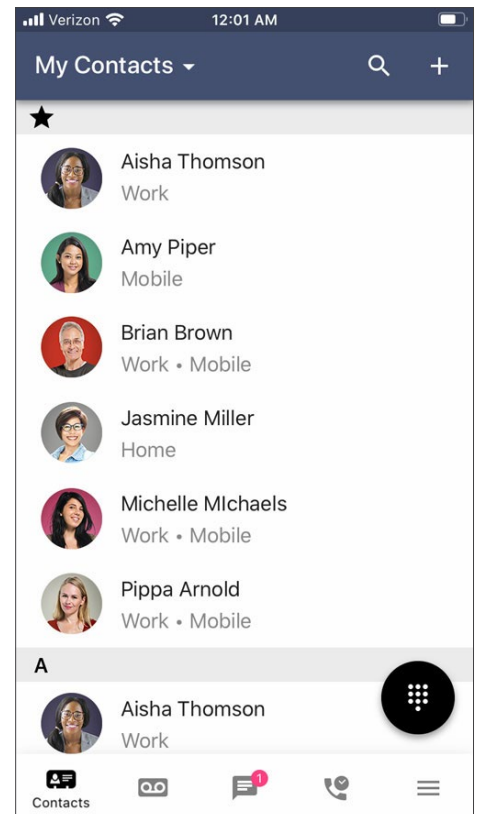
Phones purchased from ESI are pre-programmed and ready for use and they range in style and capability. Every device is shipped ready to plug in and use on day one. A variety of phones are available that allow customization to match the technical level and needs of each staff member. For example, phones for receptionists and administrators can be pre-programmed with dedicated soft or hard keys for team members, department groups or frequently dialed outside numbers.

The Administrator Dashboard
Because all of the phones and the management software are cloud-based, administrators can easily update phones, add staff extensions and change button programming with just a few clicks. Here are a few of the most popular use cases:
1. Viewing a real-time Dashboard of all staff to see who is on a call or participating in a video/phone conference and who is free
2. Forwarding calls from one staff member's extension to another in the event of absence or change in employment
3. Managing routing of calls from one or more offices to specific team members
4. Viewing call history and export records for billing by a staff member or client phone number
5. Ordering new physical phones, mobile apps or softphone access for staff working from home
6. Updating extensions of staff or creating a "hunt group" to transfer calls that immediately appear on every team member's device(s)
7. Updating business hours and call forwarding rules

Office Security and Door Locks
Your office needs to be secure and run efficiently. ESI is one of the only cloud-based providers to offer the ability to add access control to your office phone system. Only employees with the proper RFID badges or security codes will be able to unlock doors to access the facility. Visitors are able to "ring the doorbell" that launches a video call to the ESI phones. Staff members are able to see and have a

conversation with the person at the door with a single button press and can open the door for the visitor. People answering the calls can be at other locations and off site. That option is available on every ESI cloud-based system. There is an advanced web dashboard that allows for easy administration for each door access device as well as a logging of all people entering the facility along with other advanced features.

Onboarding and Support –
True White Glove Service
One of the most important reasons why we highlighted ESI as a premier provider is their ability to get a law firm up and running with mobile apps and basic call flow within 48 hours.

Over the course of a month, ESI can further scope, test, engineer and deliver advanced features of their cloud-based phone system coupled with extensive support options. ESI's US-based deployment and support team can diagnose and remedy issues with users regardless of their physical location. Additional training is available over the phone, through online videos or screen-share sessions. Ongoing check-in calls ensure that both call quality and ease of use are live and well.

Pricing Transparency
Be wary of cloud providers who advertise low prices and then add costly hidden or arbitrary charges that are often disguised as taxes or fees. ESI has never charged additional fees on top of their quoted prices. Equipment, cloud hosting and usage costs are all clearly explained to you during the sales process.

Looking Ahead
Long after COVID-19, we will remember this time as one that taught us how valuable the exercise of disaster and business continuity planning truly is. Countless law firms have been forced to shift operations to online due to shelter-in-place mandates.

And the one thing we can be sure of ... this will not be the last time.

The practice of law has shifted overnight to embrace virtual methods of communication for delivering legal services. In the future, every law firm needs to have the technology and tools in place in order to adapt to any situation. Whether it is a natural disaster, a stay at home order, or a rerouting of calls to remote staff in order to continue serving your client's needs, business continuity is no longer an option. It has become a necessity.

ESI has served professional service businesses of all sizes since 1987. Along the way, the company has continually improved products, added new features and refined the delivery of its services. To say that ESI is a seasoned provider is an understatement.

*To learn more about **ESI** or to book a complimentary virtual phone solution consult visit* www.esi-estech.com.

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let's keep in touch!

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