

Case Management System for Prosecutors offering Managed Services and IT Support



Matt Ziemianski - CEO

CEOCFO: Mr. Ziemianski, what was the original focus for Karpel Solutions, and what is it today?

Mr. Ziemianski: Karpel Solutions was founded by Joe Karpel in 1985. Joe's son, Jeff Karpel joined soon after and eventually took over all operations in the early 90's. I came in five years ago as Director of Network Services and then as CEO in 2014. Our mission has been to protect the interest of the client at all costs. Jeff thought that there had to be a better way to speed up the prosecution process so the victim's family did not have to endure the memories over and over again and justice could be served quicker so he took an application he designed a few years earlier and called it PROSECUTORbyKARPEL. This product is a case management system that allows prosecutors around the country to swiftly provide justice for the victims and get the defendant prosecuted as quickly as possible. It is now in 23 states around the country. What came from that as well is many of the users that we support today also needed IT support and a division was born out of that called INSIGHTbyKARPEL. That is now our managed services and IT support group. It is supporting about 2,000 users along with the 7,000 users of PROSECUTORbyKARPEL.

CEOCFO: Are there many systems designed for prosecutors or for case management in this arena?

Mr. Ziemianski: There are a handful. We are one of probably three big players that are out there throughout the country. Right now I would say Karpel is the fastest growing throughout the country. We have about 10%-11% of the market right now. It should be tied or just a little bigger than our next competitor. It is a niche market, but the groups that are out there, including Karpel fulfill it quite well.

CEOCFO: What are some of the challenges that need to be incorporated in this system because it is prosecutors? Why would you need something specialized as opposed to an off the shelf system?

Mr. Ziemianski: The biggest thing is to be able to provide the prosecutors with all of the information that they could ever need to prosecute a case. 10 to 15 years ago, everything was done by paper and still is by many offices. They would bring these massive boxes of files with them and then have to go through as the judge asked certain questions or as they go through with witnesses. Now with the data at their fingertips, it speeds up the process. They are able to get into court, answer the judge's questions quickly and concisely and with facts to back it up. That decrease enables us to provide the taxpayers a break because it now does not cost as much to prosecute a case and the victims in this process do not have to endure living that event repeatedly.

CEOCFO: Is it more at the time of trial? Is it while prosecutor is doing research and putting a case together that they would be using the system as well?

Mr. Ziemianski: It is throughout the entire process. It actually starts from when law enforcement would send the prosecutor the files on the defendant. Then, before it even gets to court the prosecutor will do their due diligence, their investigation and their research. The system can even assist with getting a court date if the courts software is speaking with PROSECUTORbyKARPEL. That evidence and those files are available to the prosecutor forever online.

CEOCFO: How are you able to coordinate information that is coming from many different sources?

Mr. Ziemianski: Sometimes it does get a bit difficult. We work with many different vendors throughout the country such as law enforcement agencies and courts. There are many different software packages out there. We currently have over 300 different interfaces with different groups to allow this information to come from many different locations into the prosecutor's office. We are like the hub of a wheel. Each spoke is a different data feed. We are also providing data to the

court so the court knows exactly what is going on when they create a docket for that day for what cases are going to be heard. Transferring this knowledge back and forth is a key piece of the application without having to send actual paper files back and forth, carriers, burning a CD and getting that to a court or to a defense attorney or even discovery process. The prosecutors are able to provide the evidence and information to a defense attorney all electronically as well and that is recorded so they know that the defense attorney actually downloaded it.

CEOCFO: Are you working with local governments or state governments? Is there licensing required to work with a particular state?

Mr. Ziemianski: We do work to the state and local government. It is actually the county and sometimes the city. Each county throughout the United States usually has a prosecuting attorney or a district attorney. In South Carolina's case, it is a solicitor. Each one of those is a potential client. We also do work with cities that may not be part of a county and attorney generals as well.

CEOCFO: Is there a common thread among your customers?

Mr. Ziemianski: Yes, the common thread throughout is providing swift justice and decreasing the amount of time to prosecute which ends up saving the taxpayers money and provides the victims closure quickly. With our INSIGHTbyKARPEL clients it is providing pro-active, full service IT as if it was a part of their own company.

"Our mission has been to protect the interest of the client at all costs... We are deliberate because we have a goal in mind of providing the best product we can to our users in the most cost effective manner. We are looking to create long-term partnerships with all of our clients. The revenue is coming in, will always come in, and will always continue to grow with that methodology." - Matt Ziemianski

CEOCFO: Is the potential savings more important or do you feel the prosecutors really after swift justice?

Mr. Ziemianski: The key is making sure all the data is available to the prosecutor on the case. These software service applications like our PROSECUTORbyKARPEL provide a central location for all of that evidence and data so the prosecutors can determine if the case is worth prosecuting and if there is enough evidence to move forward. That is why it is very important that users add all documents and data about the case. An application is only as good as the data it contains.

CEOCFO: Are you aggregating the raw data and helping to decide the order of cases or is it the raw data you are making available and then it is up to the prosecutor to decide?

Mr. Ziemianski: It is definitely up to the prosecutors. We provide the data as we receive it. Nothing has changed. Every document that is put into the system remains exactly as it was received.

CEOCFO: Is the prosecutor searching for information from you or are they putting the information in and you are helping them to retrieve it?

Mr. Ziemianski: We are putting all of the information into a central location. The prosecutors can add additional information as well. Any documents that may come into their office, pictures, videos, etc. they can attach it to that case so they can always have it associated with that case.

CEOCFO: Are many of your new clients going from a paper system to this or are they using some form of electronic system that is not doing the job?

Mr. Ziemianski: Most of the clients that come on board do have some sort of system already in place, they are putting ours in place of the old just to get up-to-date with the latest technology, and our system is allowing them to go paperless. We have a handful of clients now that have successfully gone 100% paperless. Others are looking forward to that day when they can stop using paper altogether.

CEOCFO: How does a prosecutor overcome the fear that somehow if it is not physically in front of you it might get lost or just might not come up when you need it? Is there any skepticism or are people today used to having everything available online?

Mr. Ziemianski: It does not come into play as time moves on. In the beginning, about a decade ago there was more concern with that because it was new. It is not a physical piece of paper sitting in front of them so they are trusting that what on is on the computer is correct. Nowadays that trust is there and I think until we get more to adopt our system there will always be a little doubt but enough trust is there that they know the information they are seeing on the screen is correct.

CEOCFO: *Is security an issue?*

Mr. Ziemianski: Security is definitely one of our primary goes and main focus. Somethings you always have to look out for is hackers. There is a compliance group that has been put in place by the FBI, called Criminal Justice information Systems (CJIS) and they have created a policy that law enforcement, prosecutors and vendors like Karpel need to adhere to. That is making sure that all of the data is encrypted when it is transferred back and forth between the computer and the server and when it is not being accessed which is called encryption at rest. There are additional items in place to prevent denial service attacks, among others. There are processes in place to prevent that from taking down the system and preventing users from not being able to access the data 24/7. Additional security includes firewalls, username and passwords that have to be changed every 30 to 60 days that have to be at least 8 to 12 characteristics long and cannot be a common word. All of these items are put in place. Two-form authentication will be available so users will have to log into one screen and if they do not pass that login they cannot get to the application itself to log in. You will see many banks using that today.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential new customers?*

Mr. Ziemianski: Working with state and local governments it could be a long process. We are competing with a small group of competitors out there. There are RFPs that are put out for quite a few of the clients that we get. We right now have about a 90% success rate for every RFP that we put out because we are cost effective and we listen to our users and we provide them the process and the ability to do their job. We have seen that every state has something different. What Missouri does is not exactly what Louisiana does or what South Carolina does. They each have their own specific processes in place that has been put in by the courts and we listen to that and put that into the product. I think listening to the customer is probably the biggest thing. No matter what state you are in you know you are going to get what is required for your state.

CEOCFO: *What is an example of what you have included from customer feedback?*

Mr. Ziemianski: For example, Missouri just implemented an increase of the length of their charge codes starting January 1. Our system has the ability to adjust to that without much work on our side and absolutely zero has to be done on the client's side. They are just going to have the longer charge coats available. That is different in every state. Every states length of charge codes is different. Louisiana may be 8 to 12 characters long so we have to support that. Another item that would probably be a big one is law enforcement import. What Missouri does and uses for their law enforcement is different from Louisiana or California may do. So we have to be able to adjust our system to import that data that they need from law enforcement and we do it quickly. We do not charge the client a large amount of money. We actually have a flat fee for the interface because it is not something that we want to nickel and dime the customer with. We want them to get the information quickly, cleanly, and with the least amount of money spent by taxpayers.

CEOCFO: *How has Karpel Solutions changed under your leadership?*

Mr. Ziemianski: Karpel's has changed in a couple ways. With the company's past and continued growth, we are changing the ways we work. We are adding more processes and procedures to allow for our continued growth. Our managed services division has also changed quite a bit. 2016 revenue for INSIGHTbyKARPEL is now on par to triple. Due in part to our first acquisition, which completed November 2015. We will continue to look for other potential acquisitions this year and the years following.

CEOCFO: *Are the other acquisitions aiding capability or are they bringing in clients that these businesses already have? What is the purpose?*

Mr. Ziemianski: It is a mixture. We are bringing in additional clients but it also is building upon our personnel as far as experience. Our knowledge is being widened to more products so we can support our customers even better and then provide a larger help desk because our help desk is based here in St. Louis. We do not use overseas. Everyone that people call for help actually get a Karpel employee.

CEOCFO: *Is it a deliberate strategy or has it been more opportunistic?*

Mr. Ziemianski: It is deliberate. We are deliberate because we have a goal in mind of providing the best product we can to our users in the most cost effective manner. We are looking to create long-term partnerships with all of our clients. The revenue is coming in, will always come in, and will always continue to grow with that methodology. Our customers have been with us for a long time. PROSECUTObyKARPEL has been out for a little over 10 years and we have not had a single live client leave. Every customer is still with us today. With the managed services side, over the four and a half years I have been here we have lost only three clients, two of them due to the clients going out of business. I think that the key factor is that our customers trust us. They know that they are going to get good communication. Whether it is good or bad, they know they can trust that they are going to get continued communication with us.

CEOCFO: *What should people take away when they read about Karpel Solutions?*

Mr. Ziemianski: When people read about Karpel they know that Karpel is a company that is going continue to be around for many years. It is a company that also active in the community and provides support for our community and nonprofits. We do a lot with a handful of nonprofits here today providing them free support and free IT. We also give back to the communities that use our systems. Jeff Karpel has begun the Karpel Foundation, and the goal is to take money that has made Karpel successful and make that available to communities around the country to provide funds for projects such as community awareness website or anything that prosecutors may have a project that they cannot get funding for. The foundation is there to provide that funding in projects that will help the community, the taxpayer, and victims.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



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**For more information visit:
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