Dockets

Meticulous docketing is an important part of law practice that most lawyers don't appreciate. For many, dockets are perceived as a nuisance that allows lawyers to get paid. They are also a very useful way to track client engagement, diligent administration of a matter, and interactions with opposing counsel and others. Tracking these activities allows professionals to demonstrate their ability to clients, courts, and the regulator. In brief: the habit of docketing may save a lawyer much heartache, should a client claim malpractice.

This antiquated article from LawPro's magazine provides a common-sense description of docketing and its relevance in an age of “e-docketing”:

2005-09-tech-tip4-2.pdf

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Cardinal rules

Docketing tracks time spent on matters and provides a justification that the client will see on her or his invoice. Some cardinal rules, then, for docketing:

- a docket is a single sentence;
- independent clauses in a docket are separated with a semicolon (–>);
- dockets end with a period;
- all independent clauses in a docket begin with a verb conjugated in the past-tense;
- capitalization is reserved for the first letter of the first word in the docket and any proper noun–common nouns are not capitalized;
- refer to all people by initials, unless that person is not known to the client, but never refer to someone working with us by anything other than initials; and
- check grammar and spelling on all dockets–a client needs to see clean prose, even in dockets.

When you docket, please also make sure that your name is being associated with the time entry. Your name is tied to the value of your billable hour. You should all have time entries that default to your account.

Examples

March 14, 2023	ASD	Reviewed file; corresponded with Moneris's purported counsel; spoke with client via telephone; spoke with client's criminal counsel via telephone; spoke with VI re. expert evidence in matter.	0.80
March 14, 2023	ASD	Phone calls Attended telephone call regarding this matter with client's criminal counsel.	0.10
March 15, 2023	ASD	Discussed matter on telephone with VI; exchanged correspondence with VI, MB, and KM.	1.00
March 17, 2023	ASD	Review Material Reviewed draft expert report; prepared and obtained signature on acknowledgement of expert's duty.	0.50
March 21, 2023	ASD	Correspondence Transmitted expert report to MB.	0.10
March 23, 2023	ASD	Correspondence Drafted letter to Moneris; sent same to Moneris.	1.20

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