

CASE STUDY

Thomson Reuters®
CoCounsel

Accelerating progress



Sullivan Festeryga
LLP
Our signature is your best defence.

David Festeryga
Partner at Sullivan Festeryga

David Festeryga is a seasoned lawyer and partner at [Sullivan Festeryga LLP](#) — a Canadian-based full-service law firm that provides legal services in all manner of litigation, corporate and commercial law, family, criminal, real estate, estate planning, and other practice areas. Following in his father's, William Festeryga (an early partner at the established firm), footsteps, the younger Festeryga specializes in insurance defence litigation.

Today, Sullivan Festeryga has incorporated the generative AI (GenAI) capabilities of Thomson Reuters® CoCounsel to accelerate their end-to-end process, save money, and grow

their practice, and — ultimately — deliver better support to clients.

The freedom to pivot quickly and effectively

The story of how Sullivan Festeryga started using the GenAI capabilities in [CoCounsel Core](#) and [Thomson Reuters® Westlaw Edge Canada with CoCounsel](#) is compelling. The firm had always been a full-service practice, but there was a time when insurance defence work became especially abundant. As a result, the firm concentrated much of its effort on this practice area. After some time, they decided to return to their roots and expand the other areas of practice again.

“CoCounsel allows all of our lawyers and clerks to have their own virtual clerk with specialized subject matter experience.”

At the time, Festeryga explains, “Our clerks typically had expertise in insurance defence cases. They knew basically one or two subject matter areas.” Now, the firm utilizes AI-Assisted Research on Westlaw Edge Canada with CoCounsel. This GenAI feature allows lawyers and clerks to ask a legal question in simple language and receive a response with citations and links to supporting Westlaw authority. “CoCounsel allows all of our lawyers and clerks to have their own virtual clerk with specialized subject matter experience,” says Festeryga, noting that AI-Assisted Research provides up-to-date and topical knowledge on legal issues needed for all practice areas.

Faster time to results

The firm also found that CoCounsel could help them deliver work at much greater speed. Whether Sullivan Festeryga is drafting a contract, trying to find information or the answer to a specific question in a 4,000-page document, or advising a client, they can get the job done faster than ever before.

In addition to making their teams faster and sharper in their work, the productivity gains also directly impact the firm’s bottom line. While they employ different billing models depending on the practice area, the time savings benefits all. For flat-fee or percentage-based projects, Festeryga explains, **“We are able to deliver quality legal services faster. The less time we spend on a project without sacrificing quality, the more profitable it becomes.”** The firm benefits even under an hourly model. While they may bill fewer hours per case, says Festeryga, “This benefits our clients, and our hope is that those saved hours will be filled with more cases from clients who see they are saving legal costs per file. We are able to provide quality legal services for our clients more quickly and efficiently, and therefore less costly for them.”

GenAI — the next frontier

When he’s talking to colleagues who might be hesitant about using GenAI, Festeryga is very clear. “The practice has not really changed,” he says. “You’re doing the exact same thing you have been doing for years; you’re just going about it differently. Before you send out any document prepared by an associate or a clerk, you are always going to check it

to ensure it meets the firm’s high standards. The same thing applies to any document created with the assistance of AI. You check and edit the work to ensure it is up to your high standards before you send it out the door. The benefit is that it takes less time, allowing you to provide your clients with their needed solutions faster and with a cost savings.”

“You’ve got to do it!”

In Festeryga’s mind, the use of Thomson Reuters tools, including CoCounsel and Westlaw Edge, is a no-brainer. **“If you don’t adapt, you’re going to be left behind” he says. “So, you’ve got to do it!”**

He believes in the product. He likes that AI-Assisted Research is part of Westlaw Edge Canada. “It is a curated database,” he says. “We know the cases are up to date. There is next to no chance of running afoul of quoting a case that does not exist as the media has reported some counsel have done in various jurisdictions.”

But more than that, the use of GenAI is where the profession is moving. Festeryga has made a concerted effort to get the senior lawyers in the firm to adopt its use. Their newer lawyers and clerks are already using it, which is the way it should be. This generation “needs to pass on information to those who come behind them, which is how the legal profession is supposed to work,” says Festeryga. **“We owe an obligation to teach those coming up behind us to become better lawyers, and this is one tool that can definitely help in achieving that goal.”**

Teaching the next generation of lawyers is that much easier when you’re working with a product you know and trust. “We were already subscribing to Westlaw,” says Festeryga. **“We know the product. We know it’s secure. And we know that [Thomson Reuters] has done [its] due diligence.”** This is very important to the firm and their clients. Sullivan Festeryga can assure their clients that any data is kept private and secure at all times.

Using AI in the practice of law is another powerful tool in Sullivan Festeryga’s toolbox to help deliver quality and cost-effective legal services to their clients.

“We are able to provide quality legal services for our clients more quickly and efficiently, and therefore less costly for them.”

Experience Thomson Reuters CoCounsel

To learn more, visit:
thomsonreuters.ca/legal

