

# Executive Thinking

## Five Current Processing Serving Trends

*Every industry has cycles, opportunities, and challenges. Considering our post-COVID world, leaders need to anticipate how the service of process industry is evolving and how to better serve clients. Seasoned leaders can identify industry trends and look for signs in changing landscapes for a competitive edge. Learn about five current trends to watch from an experienced process serving vendor.*

**By Joel Rosenthal, Vice President, ProVest LLC**

Those who have worked in the process serving industry for years—even decades—are used to looking for “clues” that the landscape is changing due to the economy or other factors. ProVest has identified the following five trends:

### **#1 – Scaling Operations**

Process serving vendors must be adept at ramping up or scaling down their operations and team without adversely affecting performance. The goal of scaling—contracting or quickly growing—is to make these actions invisible to the client—no one wants to hear about your problems! Scaling is particularly relevant in this period of historically low file volume.

### **#2 – Vendor Role Expansion**

Inflationary costs adversely affect law firms. Firms are caught between not being able to get increased contingency fees from their clients while inflation is raising operating costs. As a result, process serving vendors are increasingly being asked to take on more tasks, such as e-filing, skip tracing, and document printing.

### **#3 – Inflation's Impact**

Today, we are experiencing the largest inflationary impact on the industry in years. Costs, including labor, rent, shipping, insurance, and IT/software, have risen for everyone within the past year. Process servers have seen minimal, if any, fee adjustment for years due to margin constraints. This year's spike in fuel costs uncorked the bottle, with field process servers demanding inflationary adjustments. All companies face the challenge of operating in an environment with increased costs and compressed margins.

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– Joel Rosenthal  
Vice President, ProVest LLC

### **#4 – Automation**

Increased costs and lower margins drive the need for automation to improve speed and accuracy. Automated data mining offers tremendous financial benefits and insight. Bot technology replaces a repetitive task that a person would otherwise have to perform regarding data retrieval, including courthouse document extraction, document indexing, and messaging for service of process follow-up. Similarly, machine learning, which offers the capability of a machine to imitate human behavior, offers fully unattended yet continuous improvement opportunities. Examples include multi-dimensional legal documents, data matching, and exception-only processing to identify trends and patterns.

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## #5 – Compliance Technology

Technology innovation affects every aspect of the industry. From a compliance technology perspective, a new trend is to have electronic self-storage by the law firm of important process serving compliance information. For example, ProVest introduced a QA PDF, including compliance information, time-date stamped photos, GPS coordinates, and several other data points. This service is free for clients who can import and store the files on their systems for easy retrieval and used as evidence to defend against any future challenge to service.

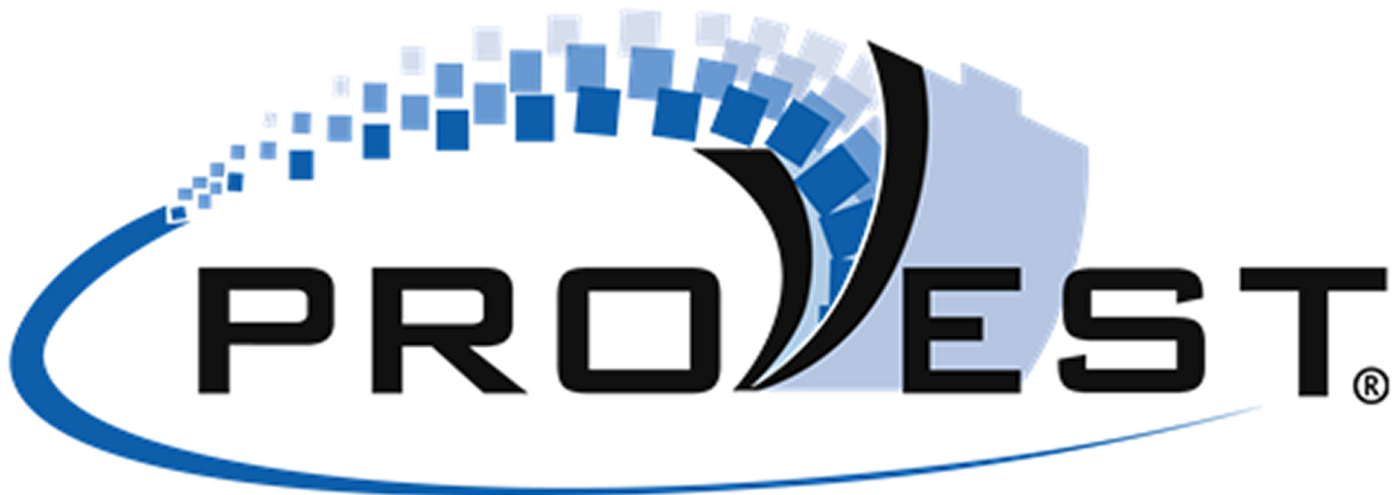
Innumerable variables influence the economy and our industry. Astute observation of trends and innovative solutions can help great firms and vendors perform at even higher levels.

***ProVest is one of the nation's largest legal support services firms, with offices in 17 locations, providing nationwide service of process and related services to many of the country's most notable law firms and financial institutions.***

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