

EXPERTS' FORUM | Technology

Can't find it? Paperless Office Boosts Efficiency

With new applications, ubiquitous Internet access, and smart hardware, a paperless office is becoming more than a business move driven only by environmental concerns. Today, it's critical to meet increasing regulations and to operate efficiently in a fast-paced business world.

By implementing a centralized electronic document filing system, organizations can better manage the variety of information they receive while maintaining a secure and auditable infrastructure.

Document management software provided by companies such as Open Text creates not only a shared, searchable digital archive, but also a way to automatically save files based on properties of the content. Document management solutions are primarily designed for scanned images.

When properly designed and implemented, document management solutions can enhance powerful platforms like SharePoint, Microsoft's information and collaboration portal. When users scan files or drag them to an icon on their desktop, document management software files the document based on the file type, client name, order number or other pertinent information the organization uses and automatically saves it in its respective folder.

This solution allows users to locate and retrieve documents based on what they are looking for: client name, invoice number, legal description, etc. They do not have to remember what they called the information or where they filed it. That ease often amazes professionals. But the clear ROI is what makes organizations of all sizes use this technology.

Here are just four ways it delivers savings:

Improved work flow: It takes an average of 5-7 minutes to print and file a document in a file cabinet.

Through document management software, firms create a specific work flow, store files faster and then give employees simultaneous access. They can automatically route purchase orders, change orders and contracts to a designated project or client folder or create a system that scans and routes all incoming mail electronically.

Heightened security: The Gartner Group estimates that 50 percent of small and medium size businesses would go out of business within three years if lost data could not be recovered in 24 hours. Document management solutions not only removes this worry, but it also allows firms to control, monitor and audit access to information, such as sensitive personnel files – far better than they could through a paper system.

Increased efficiency: On average it takes 18 minutes to search for a document, according to Gartner Research, and it is estimated that every misfiled documents costs firms \$125 in lost productivity. With document management software, receptionists, sales associates or other professionals can answer a customer's question before they hang up the phone.

Reduced hardware costs: Giga Research estimates every 12 filing cabinets require an additional employee to maintain. Document management allows firms to remove additional filing cabinets and save up to 20 percent on their printing costs. The possibilities are in the organization's hands.

Optimizing the system's performance requires organizations to identify their pain points, physical costs and common tasks and then create a work flow that delivers results today and into the future.



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