

# LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Don't let a decentralized working environment hold you back from properly automating the workflows that help you improve your business processes.

Increasingly, construction companies are examining their business processes. It is imperative to have the best and most cost efficient organization. The traditional method of evaluating business process management is through departmental "touchpoints" and a new trend is emerging to examine shared business documents. By evaluating documents that are generated, received, routed, reviewed, filed, and stored within the organization, you can identify potential business process improvements. Such improvements would include the use of a computer system and software to store, manage, and track electronic documents and electronic images (paper-based information) captured through the use of a document scanner. The most recent trend is toward managing documents through electronic copy and communication (content) to streamline and automate business processes.

Implementing technology tools to enhance a process and improve functionality provides organizations the capability to accelerate data entry, reduce labor costs, and to increase accuracy of data and reporting. Naturally, infrastructure construction work is performed decentralized from the home office more so than other construction environments which are at least able to implement server and computing systems at the jobsite. **Therefore, initiatives designed**

**As construction companies are evaluating and examining existing business processes, it will be important to consider the role documents play in an organization—how they are generated, received, routed, reviewed, filed, and stored.**

**to capture field data and documents in order to automate workflows are more complex.** Purchase requests, ticket matching, timesheets, safeties, dailies, and equipment documents and data all present significant challenges to managing information from the field when constructing a bridge, highway, or laying fiber optic cable. **By implementing electronic forms and a working environment that enables Web access to field data, along with the ability to capture documents, allows companies working at remote jobsites to better manage and facilitate the business processes. This includes processes associated with such tasks as purchase requests, ticket matching, timesheets, safeties, dailies, equipment documents, and other (non-integrated) or (intrinsically disparate) data sets.**

In parallel, headquarters and remote offices are able to implement converging technologies to better manage administrative processes and reporting. This is specifically the case with the enormous number of invoices and various job documents that are collected during the lifecycle of a job. Therefore, a great amount of time is required to manage and handle a document; construction companies have thousands of them. Infrastructure construction companies are adopting "capture" technology to lead in the efficiency of business process management.

Such technologies as OCR (optical character recognition) and ICR (intelligent character recognition) are being deployed at the corporate level to automatically extract data and classify paper documents once imaged by a document-scanning device. Automatic data extraction and classification provides the capability to eliminate manual data entry and spawn workflows for invoices, delivery tickets, purchase orders, and timesheets.

OCR technology reads and recognizes text documents and imports the data into the document management system for classification and workflow. With this data in a database, it is possible to automatically route documents to the correct person for review and approval, spending less time typing and handling documents, eliminating human errors, and freeing valuable employee resources for knowledge-based duties.

Another benefit to incorporating OCR technology into your document management system is the ability to do full-text searching. **OCR scanned documents; combine documents already in text format, and perform a full-text index by every word.** Users are able to search invoices for phone numbers, purchase card numbers, or any information found within the body of the document. OCR full-text searching reduces the time employees spend on document searches, including legal discovery response time. More advanced searching systems allow companies to OCR landscape pages in order to perform complex search queries, such as **word combinations, which will search for all possible word combinations, and fuzzy search, which will find a word even if it is misspelled.**

**Automated capture technology includes the ability to customize electronic forms and image data extraction. This can include such documents as expense reports, timesheets, POs (purchase orders), and other business forms that require electronic routing, approval, and archiving. By redesigning forms that are read electronically and filed into the document management system, organizations are able to streamline business practices, while also eliminating costs associated with multiple forms, misfiling, and labor, hardware, software for document scanning.** In addition to electronic versioning of a paper forms, the solution should quickly capture, verify, approve, and integrate data used in enterprise processes with the critical enterprise systems used to run the organization. Although other solutions solve document management and business process management

problems, they do not efficiently capture data from paper and paper equivalents and easily integrate it with existing business applications.

Business process management implies managing documents. Implementing technology to better manage, automate, and integrate documents and the appropriate workflow requires a strategy. Infrastructure construction organizations should develop a strategy to manage their information and



Infrastructure construction organizations can develop strategies to better manage, automate, and integrate documents and the appropriate workflow.

businesses processes across the enterprise. Information capture is the first step in the process of management, and a complete strategy also addresses how that information will be stored, its lifecycle, and how it will be accessed in its archived state. Security, compliance, business continuity, and risk management should also be considered as part of the total information management strategy.

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