aiim

NOW is the Time to Break Free of Paper.

5 Considerations as You Begin the Journey

Paper is still all around us. It slows our processes, creates frustrations for our customers and business partners, and it extracts a toll on the environment. Despite all of the advantages of paperless processes, many organizations struggle with taking the first step.

Paper-driven processes are a costly logjam of manual document shuffling. Paper documents are a red flag for productivity and customer responsiveness problems. According to IDC, employees waste 3.5 hours per week searching for and *not finding* documents, and additional hours are wasted recreating "lost" documents. On average, every misfiled document costs $125; a lost document costs $700.

1 **Going to the paperless office continues to meets with A LOT of resistance because people are emotionally attached to working with paper.**
This is a dynamic that managers have to be ready to take on. Leadership matters in overcoming resistance to paperless initiatives. AIIM notes that "mandates from above are the motivating trigger for the first paper-free process for 48% or organizations.

2 **There are both carrot and stick approaches to facilitating a transition to new digital workflows.**
Here's an example of the carrot. Some companies outfit employees with desktop scanners and second monitors in *advance* to indicate "we're making a big change and we're going facilitate making digital work a success for you." The sticks – thinning the ranks of conveniently placed printers and letting the paper supplies run out for days at a time, thus making old habits too painful to continue.

3 **Going paperless and digital transformation two sides of the same coin.**
AIIM research indicates that 72% of organizations believe that "Business at the speed of paper will be unacceptable in a few years' time." The companies making the effort to modernize their processes are reaping the rewards, and they know that they are just getting started.

AIIM International

4 **Remember that everyone now has a scanner in their pocket.**

Increasingly, knowledge workers are outside a central, physical office. Remote workers, pervasive business travel and satellite offices spanning time zones are the new normal. The only way to keep teams connected and productive is through mobile devices. Armed with scanning capabilities on their iPhone or Android device, these front-line workers can scan on the fly and eliminate paper at its source.

5 **Just. Do. Something.**

It's easy to delay a content management decision. A decade ago, selecting a document management solution could be *risky* – software was often complex to integrate, required lots of consultants and professional services hours, and was difficult to use. Today, the opposite is true: with the right solution, implementation is simpler and the product easier to use. The *risky* decision is to do nothing.

So where to start? Here are 12 tips.

1. Identify a process and then document where paper enters your business and processes.
2. Assess where process slowdowns happen and the reason these slowdowns occur.
3. Evaluate how removing paper from operational processes will enhance response times, improve the overall customer experience, and save in back-office costs.
4. Identify who is in charge of radical process review and seek endorsement for enacting paper-free policies.
5. Promote successes where digital information and processes are being used.
6. If you have no existing paper-free processes, pick one to use for a trial run – AP perhaps, or HR – but be careful not to become locked in to a single-point solution (e.g. from your finance system vendor).

7. Ensure that existing paper-free processes are taking full advantage of OCR, data capture and integration with core enterprise systems.
8. Evaluate how a scan-to-archive post process implementation can be changed to an up-front scan-to-process approach that improves operational efficiency by streamlining the overall process.
9. Position the system "right at the door" as a digital mailroom, defending offices from paper, and ensuring the quickest conversion to digital.
10. Do not limit your possibilities to be within the corporate walls. Look for ways to extend capture, access and engagement activities beyond the corporate walls using mobile and cloud applications.
11. Establish a continuous improvement program that will periodically review and refine those changes you make now. When a paper-free project ends, it should be the beginning of an on-going process improvement practice that looks for ways to improve upon the foundation you have set.
12. Taking the first step is better than taking no step at all. If you are unsure of where to begin or how to begin, seek professional assistance and/or training to help you set off on the right path. Look to your current suppliers and service providers for guidance.

DocuWare

This tip sheet was sponsored by DocuWare, a leading document management software company. Its solutions are available in 70 countries and 16 languages, with over 125,000 users in approximately 14,000 installations. The company, founded in 1988, operates worldwide from Germering near Munich, Germany, New Windsor, New York and from Wallingford, Connecticut, with subsidiaries in the U.K., Spain and France.

DocuWare is doing a webinar on this topic on April 19. You're invited!