

DocuWare®

APPLICATION PROFILE



Industry:

Corporate real estate

Application:

Real estate property portfolio management

The Problem:

Lack of filing space, no control over files and time-consuming document management process

The Solution:

DocuWare document management system

The Benefit:

One location for all property files, improved control over property files, streamlined record management and eliminated office space dedicated to file storage.

First Union National Bank

First Union Bank is both a tenant and landlord for various corporate properties across the country. First Union's External Tenant and Portfolio Management Division is responsible for handling all transactions that accompany real estate ownership and leasing. First Union properties are located all over the country, but are most heavily concentrated along the East Coast from Connecticut to Florida. Because First Union rents and leases property in such a large geographic area, property files are kept in one of four central file locations – one in Pennsylvania, two in Virginia, and one in New Jersey.

The Problem

The move to DocuWare had an accidental beginning at First Union. "We were literally running out of space on our floor to house all the property files," said Patrice Cosgrove, Manager, External Tenant Management. To remedy this problem they turned to John Bowling, Imaging Director, at Patterson Business Systems. While First Union was interested in buying new shelving to solve their problem, Bowling began asking some questions about their filing system to see if there might be a better solution.

Bowling found out that recording and maintaining the property files had become an extremely time

consuming process. First Union used a specific process when new documents were added to an existing property file and when a new property file was created. The process required the document to go to a number of different people who each performed a specific task before the document was filed. The rapid growth of First Union pushed the company to find a better, more efficient way to ensure that each file had been through each of the required recording processes.

After asking more questions, Bowling discovered that there were other problems with the property files that wouldn't be resolved with new shelving. "Because the filing cabinets



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*Manager,
External Tenant Management,
First Union National Bank*

were spread throughout two floors, we needed better control over the property files,” explained Cosgrove. “Easy access to the file cabinets meant that people would remove files from the cabinets without letting anyone else know.” This caused problems down the road with missing files and misfiled papers.

Maintaining accurate and complete property files is essential given the legal requirements involved in owning and leasing property. Complicating the process is the fact that property files can easily grow into huge files. A typical property file contains a number of different documents including legal documents, such as a title and deed, leases or amendments to the lease, property tax information, appraisals, and various marketing information, certificates of insurance, general

correspondence and invoices. First Union, with involvement in over 1,200 properties, has numerous property files to maintain. In addition, because of the company’s growth, First Union expects to add approximately 50 new properties each year.

Not only must the property documents be kept for legal reasons, the property and portfolio managers must frequently refer to them when handling property-related transactions (amending, extending or canceling a lease, etc.). In conjunction with the property manager’s actions, the administrative staff processes much of the paperwork that accompanies such transactions, therefore, confirming their need to have access to these property files.

The DocuWare Solution

Patterson Business Systems would have been happy to sell First Union new filing shelves, but instead Bowling proposed that First Union install a DocuWare document imaging system. While new filing shelves would have accommodated new property files, they wouldn’t have solved the other problems associated with the property files. DocuWare could. By storing the documents as images on a computer, the property files would be available to all employees simultaneously, at any time of the day or night. In addition, once the property files had been scanned, the possibility that one would be lost was eliminated. With DocuWare, First Union could free up office space dedicated to storing

documents, regain control over who has access to the documents and streamline the management of the property files.

Quickly seeing the benefits of DocuWare, First Union purchased the DocuWare system from Patterson. In addition, they turned to Patterson for additional services. Because First Union did not want to set up an in-house scanning and indexing operation, they hired Patterson to do this work for them. Patterson also provides First Union with warehousing services. Once scanned, First Union’s original property files are stored in Patterson’s secure, fire-safe facility. Today, after a new property file has been established, the documents are picked up by Patterson Business Systems for processing. Patterson has



First Union National Bank

two scheduled document pick-ups each week but can add more if needed. Once the property files arrive at Patterson, their employees scan and index the documents according to First Union's specifications. Then in a day or two, Patterson sends an account manager back to the First Union office to upload the new documents to First Union's DocuWare system. Once they are uploaded, the documents are available for retrieval using the DocuWare software on the employees' PCs. The original files are stored in Patterson's warehouse and are always available upon request.

There are nearly 30 First Union property/portfolio managers in three separate locations that now retrieve property files from their desktop using the DocuWare system. Cosgrove reports that DocuWare has been well received by the property managers and administrators that use it.

Getting the department trained on the DocuWare system proved to be no problem for Cosgrove or for the employees. "DocuWare is very user-friendly. It's not something that users need a lot of training on," she said. "In fact, if you just went into the system to play around, you could pick it up very easily."

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DocuWare Results

Efficient Use of Space—

Now that the property files are stored at Patterson Business' storage facility, corporate real estate is able to use their office space, as it was intended – to conduct First Union's business. Getting rid of the property files "has really allowed us to use our space more efficiently," said Cosgrove.

One Source for All Documents –

DocuWare provides employees with one convenient location from which to retrieve any property-related document. "Before, we had cabinets in any open space on two floors so it was difficult to know where to look for a file," said Cosgrove. "With DocuWare and a few pieces of property information, property/portfolio managers have access to every sheet of paper in that file without ever having to leave their desk."

Improved Productivity –

"DocuWare has brought a new level of efficiency and productivity to our

office," said Cosgrove. "Employees don't have to stop their train of thought to retrieve a property document. Because DocuWare makes these documents available on the employees' PC, employees can stay at their desk, get the property documents they need and complete the task at hand."

Improved Document Workflow –

Moving from a paper-based filing system to DocuWare required First Union to re-evaluate their workflow. They examined and streamlined where each document goes from the time it enters the office until it's stored in Patterson's facilities. "We had so many people involved in the process at the beginning that the process was too complicated," said Cosgrove. "After DocuWare was installed we established a very clean procedure for recording property documents."

Improved Document Control –

"Having DocuWare really does help

us keep control of the property files," said Cosgrove. "It prevents people from randomly touching the files and causing confusion."

Tool Box:

COMPUTERS: A combination of Windows 98 and Windows NT PCs.

SERVER: First Union uses a combination of Microsoft NT and Windows Terminal Server.

SOFTWARE: DocuWare Version 4.0 with a RAIMA database.

SCANNERS: None, because all scanning and indexing functions are performed at Patterson Business Systems.

