

DocuWare®

APPLICATION PROFILE



All County - Earth America

Industry:

Waste management

Application:

Accounts payable, accounts receivable, fleet management and customer files

The Problem:

This fast growing company was overwhelmed by paper and productivity lagged due to time spent searching for documents.

The Solution:

DocuWare document management system

The Benefit:

Instant document accessibility from DocuWare has boosted productivity.

All County is a 28-year-old wastewater services company that was recently purchased and is now a division of Earth America. Earth America is a comprehensive service organization with business units serving the waste needs for residential, commercial, industrial and government customers. All County services include septic service maintenance, bulk transportation/waste disposal, wastewater management, sewer and drain cleaning, and portable toilet rental. All County is the largest septic cleaning company in New Jersey and New York State, handling approximately 7,000 cleanings each year. All County has a staff of approximately 78 employees and has 40,000 customers.

The Problem

All County found itself in an enviable position. Business was good, they were adding customers daily and the company was growing rapidly. In fact, the company had grown so much that they remodeled their building, adding on more space to accommodate new employees.

But along with new customers came more paperwork in the form of contracts, bills, and correspondence. It added up to almost 10 file cabinet drawers a year.

The problems started just three months after they remodeled their building. Despite building a file room to accommodate what John Coppola, Service Center Manager, described as

“more files than I thought we’d ever have,” filing space for customer files and accounting documents was running out. Space was so short that Coppola briefly considered building more space just to store the files.

Before making such a drastic decision, Coppola thought about his problems a bit more. He realized that while lack of file space was certainly an issue, the bigger

problem was finding a document that had been filed. Their filing method was easy for filing things away, but difficult for retrievals. Invoices were simply filed alphabetically under the client or vendor name. So the “C”



“I figure I’m saving several thousand dollars a year in labor costs by eliminating the time these employees spend looking for files.” Because they spend less time looking for documents they are able to spend more time working on the issues that caused them to look for the document in the first place.”

John Coppola,
*Service Center Manager,
All County
Earth America*

with C in random order. Employees would have to go through the file item by item to locate what they wanted. This time-consuming task was affecting productivity in the customer service and accounting departments. Coppola also spent too much time looking for customer proposals when trying to close out new business.

When thinking about where to turn for a solution, Coppola recalled a conversation he’d had with a sales representative about storing documents electronically. Believing that this technology held the answer, he did some research and quickly had three proposals under consideration.

The DocuWare Solution

All County installed the DocuWare system in March 1999. The company trained one employee, a bookkeeper, to enter documents into DocuWare. While there was a lot of scanning initially, today, the DocuWare System Administrator spends just an hour or two a day scanning and indexing documents. She is able to keep up with this task as well as her bookkeeping responsibilities.

There were three applications that All County wanted to create right away: accounts receivable, accounts payable and fleet maintenance. They began with accounts receivable files. Because these documents are retrieved most frequently in the first six to nine months after being issued, All

After reviewing the solutions, Coppola purchased the DocuWare document management system. With DocuWare, Coppola said that he had “the perfect combination of storage and retrieval capabilities.” To him, “DocuWare was the ‘Cadillac’ of document management systems.” Most importantly DocuWare had the easiest document retrieval. “Because a number of employees from a range of departments were going to be using the system, retrieval had to be easy,” said Coppola, “and DocuWare had the easiest document retrieval by far.”

County decided to go back and scan all the accounts payable documents beginning in January 1998.

Once these documents were in the DocuWare electronic filing cabinets, All County scanned all their fleet maintenance records. All County is required to keep documentation on vehicle maintenance, accident reports, mechanic reports and driving records for up to ten years according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. These documents are used in the event of an accident. With a fleet of nearly 100 vehicles, these records were taking up a lot of space.

The third application created was for the accounts payable



All County - Earth America

documents. This application contained all of the company's paid invoices.

After just four months, three DocuWare applications were up and running. Then Coppola decided to create an application for customer files. All County's customer files contained lots of different documents, such as the original proposal, a copy of the signed contract, work orders, and correspondence related to the account. Moving these documents to the DocuWare electronic filing cabinet emptied a lot of real filing cabinets in the All County offices. "Slowly but surely we're getting rid of paper," summarized Coppola.

All County has approximately 10 users who are retrieving documents. Employees from the bookkeeping, accounting, customer service and maintenance department all know how to use the system and they're using it a couple of times a day. The most frequent users are the customer service and accounting employees. To retrieve documents, users simply open the DocuWare program on their desktop PC and enter a keyword or words and the matching document appears on their screen.

DocuWare Results

Coppola is glad he installed the DocuWare solution. "It's actually met all of my expectations. It's easy for other people to access, it's easy for our operator to enter documents and it's really done the job that I thought it would do," said Coppola. Earth America, All County's parent company, has noticed the changes at All County as a result of installing DocuWare. They are impressed and interested in what DocuWare can do for the other branches of the company.

DocuWare Results in Productivity

Increases – "If one of my customer service agents spends just fifteen minutes a day looking for a contract or work order, that's an hour and fifteen minutes a week or over 60 hours a year," said Coppola. "My accounting staff spent twice as much time looking for documents. I figure I'm saving several thousand dollars a year in labor costs by eliminating the time these employees spend looking for files." Because they spend less time looking for documents they are able to spend more time working on the issues that caused them to look for the document in the first place. The productivity gains have helped them keep up with the growing number of customers.

DocuWare is Cost Effective

"The time DocuWare has saved my employees in having to look for documents has almost paid for the system," said Coppola. Coppola

figures his cost savings by estimating the time his employees spent looking for documents by the employee's salary. Given the amount of time they spent retrieving files, it wasn't long before DocuWare paid for itself.

Customer Service has Improved

"DocuWare has made their [customer service employees] jobs much easier," said Coppola. Rather than heading off to the file room to look for documentation to answer a question, they can respond to customer inquiries from their desk without having to call the customer back. "They really like the system. It didn't take them long to adapt to it at all," said Coppola.

DocuWare Produced Fast Results

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cabinets, All County tossed out the paper files. “Once we got the accounts receivable documents file in DocuWare, we were immediately able to get rid of lots of invoices. I can’t tell you how many, but it was a lot.”

DocuWare Brought Order to Chaos – While the fleet maintenance records application was primarily created to eliminate

filing storage problems, it has brought other benefits. When these records were stored in traditional file cabinets, there was no way to file them in an orderly manner. Now that they’re stored electronically, DocuWare’s retrieval method allows All County to quickly locate any number of documents related to a driver or a particular vehicle. Such a task would have been difficult under the old system.

The Future

All County is looking forward to creating more DocuWare applications. “One of the next areas we want to tackle is our tax files,” said Coppola. “Our goal is to store all of our tax documents in DocuWare.”

In fact there’s not much

Coppola doesn’t want stored in DocuWare. “I want to put everything in DocuWare,” he said. “The DocuWare system really worked out well for us. I’m really satisfied. I think we made the right choice.”



Tool Box:

COMPUTERS: A mix of Windows 95, 98 and NT

SERVER: Windows NT

SOFTWARE: DocuWare Version 4.1 with the RAIMA database

SCANNERS: Canon DR3020

