



eTECHnews



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eTECHnews: The Paperless Office: "Going Green"

Go Green and Save Green in “Your” Process

Have you ever noticed that it costs more to go green in some cases? Here’s a planet-friendly solution that actually puts green back into your bottom line.

It’s all about paper. We can all attest to the fact that paper is everywhere. We also know it’s not going away, at least not anytime soon. Businesses are consumed by it – paper is in every department and it is a part of nearly every business process. Managing and processing paper has been so engrained in us for so long, we don’t even think about its impact on the bottom line. It flows into, through and back out of the organization. We are all handling paper, and the reality is, the sheer volume of it is very costly.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers “An average organization makes 19 copies of each document, spends \$20 in labor to file each document, spends \$120 in labor searching for each misfiled document, loses one out of every 20 documents and then spends 25 hours recreating each lost document.” When you add it all up, we are all paying a high price to manage paper. What’s worse, because paper has been so fundamental to our business processes for so long, we don’t even think about an associated price tag as we continue to move it through the organization. And, we there’s no way for us to recognize that these processes of old are barbaric and we’re actually quite inefficient!

Okay, so we’ve been trying for years, and it’s evident that we probably cannot eliminate paper completely, but what if we could significantly reduce the cost of processing it – by simplifying the way we manage it? And even though we’re willing to bear extra costs to be more “green,” what if the investment in doing so actually resulted in a savings from what we’re currently spending? And what if over time, we could actually save volumes of resources, inside and outside of the organization?

Your paper needs a technology commitment.

It’s as simple as a commitment to document imaging and business process automation – two technologies that each promote efficiency, but together, they provide quantum leaps in efficiency while promoting green policies. Monumental advancements have been made in these two business technologies, affecting business processes. Combine the two, and you can easily integrate into existing applications, such as your accounting and billing system, to support your entire business world. Today, document imaging and process automation are playing a significant role in achieving a “greener” environment.

Think about it...

The legal industry is heavily dependent on paper in every department from Human Resources to Litigation, to Billing and Accounting. You can minimize the cost of managing paper by reducing your production of it, not to mention reducing wear on your printers, by implementing technologies that support each of your business processes. When you enable automation, you gain the ability to notify users, including everyone on the team, with a link to the related document instead of copies of the document. The document image can even launch an automated process with mandated actions -- all without circulating paper.

Chargeable disbursement images can be automatically collected onto the client's "pre-bill" & "bill" further reducing staff time and paper currently required to manually make copies of AP invoices. Link supporting spreadsheets and memos directly to actions such as depreciation journal entries. In the accounting function alone, there are several areas that benefit from these cost savings:

- Accounts Payable
- Scheduled Check Printing
- Manual Checks Printing
- Billing Processes
- Accounts Receivable
- Write Offs
- Journal Entries – can intake supporting spreadsheets and memos when the entry is posted • Client Disbursements
- Collections
- Inquiries

Let's get to the point... where do the savings really exist?

Imaging automation technology can make your organization greener while making your bottom line greener. The "make me a copy of that" is now replaced with "email me a copy of that". Document imaging technology offers a multitude of savings that put green back into your organization:

- Reduce clerical resources that were previously needed to file and retrieve documents in physical filing cabinets
- Reduce the need for paper and filing supplies, including filing cabinets which take up valuable commercial real estate square footage, and the paper that fills them
- Reduce mailing and shipping costs by emailing documents or making them available to others via a secured link, saving the fuel required to transport them
- Reduce warehouse storage and off-site retrieval costs (and fuel to move them) because documents are at your fingertips on your desktop
- Increase savings by automating new business intake, including conflict verifications that reduce timeframes from weeks to minutes!
- Increase savings with automated expense reports and receipts, you save every time a report or receipt goes digital

Paper will only continue to flow through our doors.

Despite our best efforts, whether for efficiency or for going green, we will continue to receive paper because others will keep sending it. And we have to do something with it when it arrives. The best solution is to intercept and stop the paper flow as quickly as possible by converting it into a digital image the moment it hits your door. You may not be able to keep it from showing up at your door, but with this approach, you'll keep it from proliferating inside your walls.

When paper goes digital, business is transformed.

When paper goes digital, distribution and review becomes a simple email notification. Document arrival, distribution and retrievals are done electronically, and within seconds. The need to physically copy and distribute copies is no longer necessary. Business is transformed and conducted from a desktop, uninterrupted and more efficient.

Yes, the paper document arrived and it still exists, but with imaging technology, it hasn't been copied and physically distributed nineteen times. Also, with a "capture at first touch" approach, the organization becomes more efficient, with document filing, tracking and availability all occurring earlier in the process. It's a greener, more planet-friendly approach to be sure, but it also makes the organization more effective when people can access documents sooner.

Sounds good, but where to begin?

How do you know which software is best for your business? Simply said, make sure the solution fully supports existing hardware and business processes for all areas of your company or firm. Further, consult with subject experts to ensure functionality and ease of use for both end users and IT groups.

Embracing the idea throughout the organization.

There is a final note of caution that you may want to consider. For those who have grown up with paper-based documents, the thought of going paperless can be fearsome indeed. Organizationally, the idea of going paperless will strike fear and resistance in many. A better way to ease into this new digital world, and a more realistic expectation to set, is to consider that you're not going paperless; rather, you're implementing a system that lets your business operate with less paper. This approach will cause less resistance to the idea, and when people begin to experience the efficiencies, what would have been resistance will morph into an embrace.

Green for the planet. Green back into your bottom line.

No matter how you look at it, it's green. Not paperless, but less paper. That's the winning formula and the winning approach for any paper-intensive organization, function or department. There really is a green solution that will put green back into your bottom line. It's all a matter of how you manage paper and your process for moving it through the organization.

About the Authors

Together ImageTag and I-nnovate are assisting companies with their "going green" programs by providing their automation solutions and expertise. And customers are realizing the green difference!

ImageTag, Inc. is an industry pioneer in imaging technology. It's KwikTag document imaging product was engineered specifically to support existing business processes. The software supports both paper-based documents and other electronic documents such as spreadsheets, email or word processing files. The company holds several patents and awards for its innovations. For more information, visit www.imagetag.com.

I-nnovate Technology Solutions is a leading systems integrator and consulting firm that specializes in process-centric, Enterprise Automation Solutions that optimize fiscal performance, workforce productivity, accelerated process cycles, and regulatory compliance for professional, corporate and government organizations. For more information, visit <http://www.i-nnovate.com>.

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