



Guest column: Document programs save time, money

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With another year winding down, businesses are busy setting new goals, seeking out new opportunities and looking for ways to cut costs for 2011. One cost-cutting measure could be as close as the piece of paper in your hand.

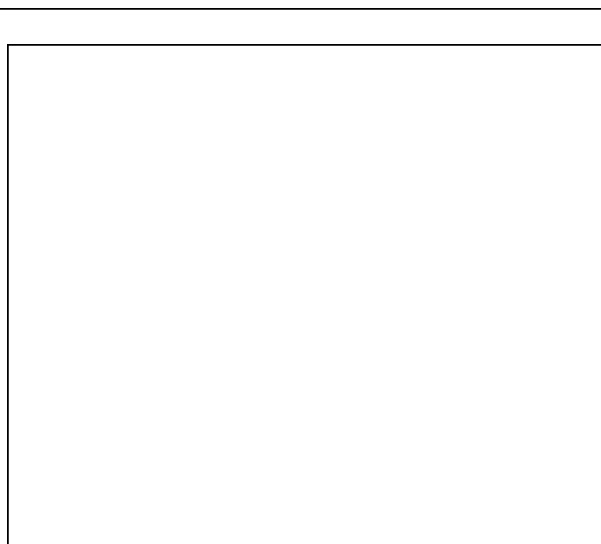
Take a minute to think about this: How much time do you spend each day copying, searching, retrieving and re-creating lost or misplaced documents? It's safe to say that no matter what industry you're in, or how organized your office is, countless hours and resources are wasted, and these expenses can impact an entire organization. There is a solution to this madness. The answer is to consider the advantages of a document management program in your business.

With a document management program, you can improve the management and control of hard copy business records and files currently managed on your server. Hard copy files can be scanned, and electronic files can be centralized into a single repository with a database of indexed criteria to make searching and sharing information simple and easy. With just a click of a mouse, an authorized user can access the information at their desktop versus physically searching a filing cabinet or storage room. Not only are all your files stored in a secure repository, but the system manages record retention periods as well. When a file has reached its full retention period, with the appropriate approval, the record will be removed or purged from the system.

As you can see, the list of advantages of going electronic with your records is extensive. Misfiling of documents and document loss is eliminated. The centralized repository reduces your reliance on paper and reduces storage costs. Documents can be easily shared within your organization, and you'll have access to information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Document management can allow for added security measures, and retention periods are monitored so your business will be compliant with state and federal regulations. By going electronic with your records, personnel can spend their workdays on more important, revenue-generating tasks rather than cost-prohibitive administrative tasks.

All too often, business owners assume document management solutions will be costly or extremely time-consuming, but with today's technology and resources this is not the case. Do a little research by speaking with a local firm that offers a variety of imaging options. As you can see from the options that follow, there are document imaging solutions that can meet just about any need:

- Service bureau solution: All aspects of a document management program are handled by a trusted vendor.
- Enterprise solution: Vendor provides any software to meet the company's needs.
- Scan-on-demand solution: Stored documents are scanned on an as-needed basis. **Eric Haas is president of Automated Records Management Systems, a full-service commercial records center in De Pere.**



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