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IRIS USA stops drowning in paper and becomes virtually paperless

Situation

IRIS USA, Inc. has paper and lots of it. It's estimated that the accounts payable department alone accumulated and stored about 1 million pieces of paper over the last 12 years.

All this paper was taking up a lot of storage space for IRIS USA, a leading manufacturer of organizational plastic totes and bins for retailers like The Container Store, Staples and Bed, Bath and Beyond.

While the company made good use of its signature storage products, the cumbersome task of filing, storing, and locating all of these files required lots of time, effort, and cost.

For example, at the end of every year, the company's files were rearranged with the oldest year located at the company's headquarters in Pleasant Prairie, WI, heading to the warehouse, the second oldest year moving to an upstairs location, and the current year transferring to another area nearby to make room for the upcoming year's files.

Then there was the job of digging up information when it was needed. A routine company audit took manpower and a forklift to haul pallets of information to a location where the auditor could work and then to haul it when the audit was complete.

With its massive paper jungle, the company wasn't exactly living up to its motto of "Living Life Organized." That's why the company decided to trade in its antiquated paper filing system for LaserFiche™ Document Imaging technology.

Identifying a needs and a solution

By enlisting the help of CT Access, the accounts payable department of IRIS USA can now capture purchase orders electronically and scan in receiving documents and invoices. With the ability to process its invoices electronically, the data captured from the invoice can be used to create a batch import to their accounts payable system so this information only needs to be keyed in once.

"CT Access helped us to identify our key needs and the inefficiencies in our current process, design a solution, and implement this solution," said Leroy Kolacinski, Accounting Manager for IRIS USA. "Throughout this process, CT Access provided support along the way and quickly resolved any problems we encountered."

When this idea was originally introduced to IRIS USA's accounts payable employees, there was some fear about implementing this change. They were so used to having hard copies of their documents that they feared getting rid of paper copies wouldn't work.

"But after meeting with CT Access to design the document imaging technology system to fit our specific needs, everyone became excited about implementing it because they saw firsthand how it would make their jobs better," Kolacinski explained.

Saves space, time, and sanity

The document imaging system allows IRIS USA to store millions of scanned images onto a single hard drive, which equates to about 100 filing cabinets.

"Going paperless will vastly decrease the amount of filing space we will need, as well as reduce the amount of time we spend on manually filing, searching for, copying, and moving our documents each year," said Kolacinski.

"After only a few months of using the system, our department already saves a couple hours per week and more than $2,000 per month on the mundane tasks of filing and searching for files," Kolacinski continued. "My employees can now do more interesting work that will also add more value to the company."

Shares well with others

Now IRIS USA can electronically manage all of its records and retrieve the ones it needs in seconds instead of spending a lot of time digging through paper files.

Others in the company also don't have to wait for a designated person to locate information. They can access it themselves when they need it. This is especially beneficial since IRIS USA is a subsidiary of Ohyama Co. in Japan.

Before, with the 14-hour time difference between the United States and Japan, if a manager in Japan had a question about an expense, the manager may have had to wait until the next day for someone in the accounting department in the United States to dig up the information in the filing system.

"Now, if a manager in Japan has a question about an expense, he can use the electronic system to quickly search the company's invoices for his answer at anytime of the day," explained Kolcinski. "This increases everyone's productivity."

A paperless future

This is just the first step for IRIS USA. The company is also looking to implement the document management system in its human resources department and distribution department. Once the distribution department is up and running, the entire purchasing process will become virtually paperless from point of order entry through order invoicing.

CT Access

CT Access, the document management division of Computer Technologies, has been helping companies throughout Southeastern Wisconsin to effectively manage their documents with LaserFiche™ Document Imaging technology. For more information, visit www.ctaccess.com or call (262) 789-8210.