

Document Management Solution



Executive Summary:-

- Enterprises produce and receive vast amounts of information in both electronic and paper form. Whether they are government offices, healthcare groups, legal courts, manufacturing businesses, insurance companies, or providers of higher education, companies perform best with the ability to manage and collaborate information with speed, accuracy, and efficiency.
- Everyone organizes their documents, emails, scans, electronic faxes, graphics, etc. in some fashion, whether or not they use a document management system (“DMS”). More sophisticated users develop naming conventions to make identifying and retrieving documents easier.
- Just as everyone organizes their documents, so too has everyone not using a document Management system spent much too much time hunting for “lost” documents, often even re-typing them, hunting for subdirectories that were “dragged and dropped” who knows where, and so on. These are some of the issues that typically drive firms to adopt a document management system.

“A Document Management System is the traffic cop that brings order to this chaos:

- Organizing it by client/ matter, categorizing the types of documents and directing them to the proper place.” The primary goal is to eliminate paper and the cost associated with it.

- Document Management System is seen as a “Bottom-Line” enterprise application and technology with objectives identified as reducing administrative cost, improving efficiency and enhancing profit. Everyone has experienced the frustration of not being able to find that piece of paper or file for issues like searching for nonexistent information, failing to find existing information, or recreating information that can not be found.
- Document Management Solutions allow companies to capture, organize, manage, preserve, and control unstructured information. “DMS provides users with common desktop applications, easy-to-use templates, and simple creation and capture procedures, making search and retrieval faster. DMS also performs workflow and lifecycle management—handling the review, revision, and approval of any piece of content according to user-defined rules.

Why Document Management:-

- For Government organizations, medium and large law firms, with tens or hundreds of thousands of documents, using a document management program to organize, index and control their documents is an absolute necessity.
- Many solo practitioners and smaller firms, however, do not see the need. They feel that with a well thought out directory structure they can have adequate access to their documents. They argue that any added functionality offered by document management programs is not worth the expense of additional hardware and software, training, and administration. This paper details some of the advantages document management offers even a solo practitioner or small law firm.

How Document Management Works:-

- In a document management system, each document is assigned a profile sheet or “template” which typically contains a long description for the document, author, client/matter information, document type and perhaps other items. For example, an insurance company might want to identify the state law governing policies or contracts.
- A firm representing a real estate developer might need extra fields to identify the client, the specific property, and various tenants. Both the profile and the full text of the document are indexed for rapid retrieval. A file name is assigned by the document management system, which decides where to store the document based on criteria set up by the firm.
- When a user starts to retrieve a document, a list of the most recent documents user has worked on, including the long document description, appears first. If the desired document is not on this list, the user enters search criteria on the profile screen and is presented with a list of “hits.” These searches are generally possible, including a combined search of both the profiles and the full text index of the entire document store.

- Depending on the program, additional features can provide advanced security options, better reporting on document use, version control, an audit trail showing who has accessed the document, and so on.

Tackling Challenges:-

- The goal of implementing DMS varies from one organization to the next, but the ultimate goal is to better serve clients and customers while improving the bottom line.
- The DMS customers fall into three categories. The first are those with a goal to assume better control over content. The second group consists of those striving for better efficiency. For some, the hope is to heighten productivity on an individual or team level. DMS makes it easier for individuals to find or reuse content, and ensure the latest version of the content is used.
- “Organizations adopt DMS to address challenges associated with unmanaged information - how to leverage content for competitive advantage and minimize compliance risks.”
- Measurable ROI is top criteria for enterprises shopping for DMS. Customers purchase solutions that improve business processes, meet regulatory requirements, or show a feasible ROI.

Key Considerations/Features in Opting for Document Management:-

Key considerations that lead a firm to adopt a DMS are:

Centralizing Force

Document management is a centralizing force. When all users are obliged to use the same system, you are assured that, for example, all correspondence is stored under “correspondence” rather than “letters;” or under “motions” rather than differing subsets of motions and that everyone uses the same conventions. In addition, it ensures that all documents, emails, faxes, scans and saved Web pages are stored in the same place, rather than some being stored on the server and some on the local desktop; that all documents are organized using the same system instead of having a given client’s documents stored using different criteria -by user, by practice area, document type, etc.

Greater Speed of Document Retrieval:

In a manual system, the user must know where an existing document has been stored and what its name is. While most users are fairly efficient at finding their own documents, searching for a document created by someone else can take a significant amount of time. In many cases, a user spends a lot of time searching for a document, or even winds up retyping it.

Avoidance of Human Error:

The time lost in a manual system due to human error is substantial. A user may have stored a document in the wrong place by accident, forgotten what the document was named, or even “dragged and dropped” an entire directory to some new location without even being aware of it. When someone other than the original author tries to access a document, difficulties are compounded. A user may have to look in four or five places before finding a document, or even be unable to find it at all. If the original author of the document is out of the office due to vacation, illness, etc. this can be a serious problem. When people change jobs or assignments, the problem is aggravated.

Full Profile and Text Indexing:

The fact that profiles and the full text of all documents are indexed has other advantages besides increased efficiency in retrieving documents. For example, define a search that lets us see at a glance all documents of a particular type that contain certain words. Full text indexing can also be of assistance in conflict checking, for example by searching on all documents that refer to a particular business or person.

Return on Investment (ROI):-

- ROI answers the question “What do I get in return for the money I’m being asked to spend?” Some organizations express ROI as a simple measure of the time it takes to recover the cost of an investment.
- In past, when IT professionals and executive leaders discussed the ROI of a technology investment, they were primarily thinking of financial benefits. Today, business and technology leaders need to take into account the *non- financial* benefits of IT investments such as how document management will facilitate the achievement of broader corporate goals.
- Financial benefits include changes to a company’s budget and finances. Non-financial benefits includes effects on business operations and productivity, for e.g. improved customer satisfaction, better usage of current and archived information, and shorter product cycle time. These more transparent benefits are hard to define, difficult to quantify and very in importance with different businesses.
- Productivity gains as well as bottom-line results are important criteria for evaluating a document management implementation. “It’s easy to claim the productivity gains should not be included since there are not direct benefits or reductions in budgets from increased productivity. However, we should consider the additional employees we would need to hire to do the same work or the increase in output from the same number of employees.”

Conclusion:-

- Document Management Solution saves time and cost. Properly implemented DM systems offer businesses a way to stay organized and compliant. In addition, DM solutions allow for a quick transfer of information to customers, a practice that improves customer relationships.
- The cost of implementing DMS is inexpensive and the rewards are great. Finding the right fit for business takes some investigation. Implementation and training employees also takes effort. “It’s like anything else - as soon as people start using it they relax and don’t realize how much time they once spent looking for things. The ROI generated from DM is evident—in both time and money saved.