PAPERLESS OFFICE…. FACT OR FANTASY

An overview of Electronic Document and Records Management

Image Advantage Solutions Inc.

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LEARN ABOUT:

- What is the Paperless Office?
- Why paper filing is going the way of the manual typewriter.
- The benefits of Electronic Document and Records Management.
- Is it possible?
- How do you get there?
- How we can help!!!

OVERVIEW

Okay, the answer is that the completely "Paperless Office " is pretty much a fantasy. There will always be some paper. The "Less Paper Office" however is not only probable but inevitable.

Just as word processors have taken over from manual typewriters, Electronic Document and Records Management Systems or "EDRMS" (which is a more professional term than the Paperless Office) is taking over paper filing systems. This whitepaper will explain the advantages of EDRMS over paper filing systems and how to migrate from your existing paper system to the "LESS PAPER OFFICE".
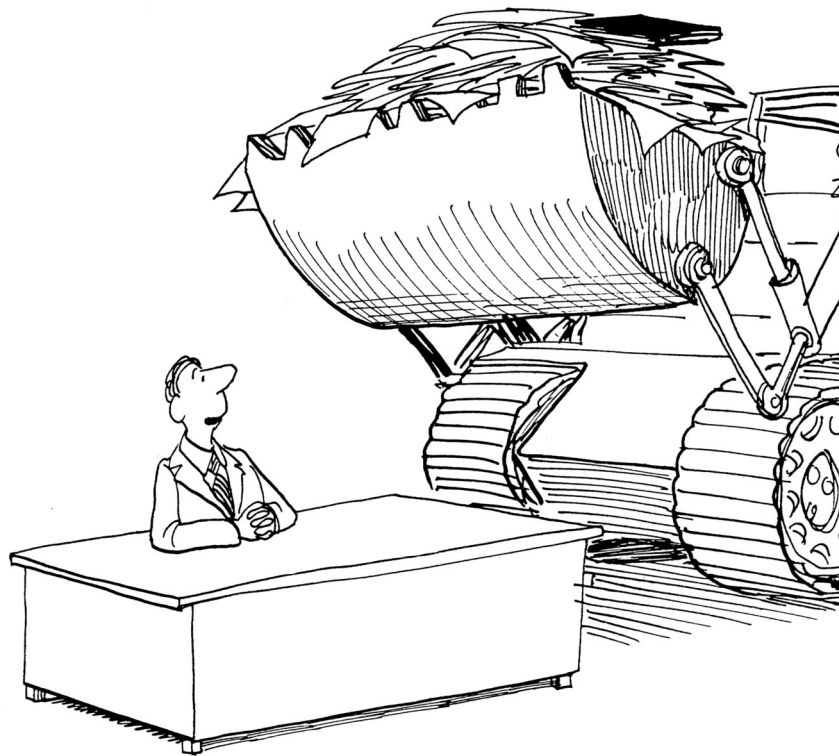
"I'm in a paperwork mood, let 'er rip."

WHAT IS THE PAPERLESS (OR LESS PAPER) OFFICE?

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines Paperless as:

> "Recording or relaying information by electronic media rather than on paper."

The "Less Paper Office" is a work environment where information is stored and distributed electronically instead of by paper. I think most people would agree that this just sounds more efficient than doing things the old way on paper.

In most cases the "Less Paper Office" or Electronic Document and Records Management Systems (EDRMS) is a computer based software solution that can reside on existing computers systems or in the "Cloud". These systems will store all electronic records such as Word files, emails, audio files, video files and scanned images of paper documents. These records may then be accessed on all of the computers in the office or from remote locations using the internet.

INEFFICIENCIES OF PAPER FILING

In the mid 1990's the UK Accounting Firm of Coopers & Lybrand did a study on the costs of storing paper in paper based filing systems and came up with the following figures.

◆ A typical four-drawer file cabinet holds 15,000- 20,000 pages, costs $25,000 to fill and $2,000 a year to maintain.
◆ Companies spend 5% of their total filing costs on equipment, 20% on space and 70% on salaries.
◆ Companies spend $20 in labor to file a document, $120 to search for misfiled documents and $250 to recreate a lost document.

These figures are from back in the 1990's, with inflation those numbers are much larger now. Paper filing is expensive and it's also inefficient.

There are a number of problems with paper filing such as:

◆ Expensive
◆ Lost or misfiled records
◆ Difficult to share or distribute
◆ Expensive to reproduce
◆ Low security control
◆ Takes up a lot of expensive office space
◆ Slow and painful to retrieve
◆ Difficult to edit
◆ Slow customer service
◆ Susceptible to disaster such as fire or flood

THE ADVANTAGES OF AN ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (EDRMS)

There are a wide range of advantages that result from implementing an EDRMS including:

♦ Save employee(s) time in finding and accessing needed documents
♦ Easy to distribute documents throughout an organization and to the public if needed
♦ No more lost files
♦ Version Control – everyone is accessing the most current version(s) of a document(s) with the ability to see how a document changes over time
♦ Greatly improves decision making processes in an organization
♦ Reduces paper records filing costs and makes it possible to move documents off-site freeing up valuable floor space
♦ Makes it possible to easily back-up documents in case of disaster (flood, fire, theft, etc…)
♦ Saves on wear and tear of paper records
♦ Makes it possible to easily comply with Government and ISO Standards
♦ Increases the ability to securely store confidential documents

OK, HOW DO I GO PAPERLESS???

The first thing to remember is "don't try and do it yourself". This is a complicated process with many specific steps that is best performed by professionals. The process could include:

♦ Analysis of paper based system
♦ Analysis of electronic documents and systems
♦ Analysis of email requirements
♦ Workflow throughout the organization
♦ Analysis of existing computer infrastructure
♦ Backup
♦ Creation of a file classification system with retention
♦ Analysis of electronic records management system requirements
♦ Purchase of electronic records management system (EDRMS)
♦ Installation of EDRMS
♦ Backfile conversion of paper records
♦ Importation and indexing of existing electronic records

To find out more detail of the implementation process please visit our white paper:

[What You Must do Prior to Implementing an
Electronic Records Management System](#)

OK, WHAT ABOUT THE PAPER???

So the completely "Paperless Office" is unlikely. There will always be paper because it is not cost effective to digitize everything. That does not mean however that the paper records can not be managed as part of the Electronic Document and Records Management System. A good system will manage the physical location and retention of the paper records so they are easily found and properly disposed of (shredded) when their usefulness has expired.

CONSULTANTS

As you can see the process of moving from a paper based system to the "Less Paper Office" is time consuming and has significant costs associated with it. It is important to have qualified consultants (such as **Image Advantage Solutions Inc.**) to walk you through the process so that in the end you will have a system that functions optimally and that will give you the greatest benefits.

CONCLUSION

Most organizations these days are in some stage of migrating to the "Less Paper Office". Although this process can be time consuming and expensive its benefits greatly outweigh the pain. Once the process has been completed the organization will operate much more efficiently and cost effectively. These systems also protect the organization from disasters that may happen to paper documents such as floods and fires. This will also make them more compliant to Government standards.

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