

Sage Construction and Real Estate Solutions



Going paperless

Regain control over storage,
routing, and approval of
critical documents.



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Introduction

Picture it: Rooms full of cardboard document boxes and rows of filing cabinets. You are tasked with finding one piece of paper. You have to spend precious time looking through drawers and boxes—and all the while there's a chance that the last person to pull the document may never have put it back in its proper place. For long-running construction and real estate companies, this is a daily reality.

Electronic document management (EDM) puts an end to the paper chase and gives you control over content with an easy way to store, retrieve, and route documents throughout your organization. You can capture, upload, or import any type of document from any location. The electronic storage option allows workers to use keywords to search for files without ever having to leave their desks.

Most document management tools allow users to modify and manage systems and incorporate many physical filing procedures such as storage location, security, and access and version control, the Association for Information and Image Management says.¹ Another benefit of maintaining electronic files is the ability to maintain an audit trail or record of who has accessed the content and better protect critical documents. Content can be protected by document- and index-level security.

Document management can also help simplify processes from project start to finish. For example, when you need to get group approval for a particular item such as a contract, estimate, or proposal, it is much more efficient to share an electronic version of the file. It not only ensures that the correct people review the document but also creates an audit trail so you can keep track of one another's edits as well as preserve the document in its original form.

Gain control by automating accounts payable workflow

By replacing your manual invoice approval and coding systems with a paperless process, you'll reduce the cost of processing and ensure prompt payments. You'll also be able to quickly find the support documentation you need using security-driven search tools.

- Receive invoices
- Capture data
- Route invoices for approval
- Process payment
- Store data
- Retrieve data for review
- Provide reports

1 <http://www.aiim.org/What-is-Document-Management>

Document management and the construction industry

EDM systems offer many applications that are relevant to the construction industry, including keeping track of important documents such as blueprints, receipts for supplies, bids, permits, and more.

Many construction companies have been able to significantly reduce manual data entry and increase productivity by eliminating paper-based systems. Electronic document management simplifies the storage and management of critical documents, frees up storage space, and allows for efficient routing and approval workflows.

The electronic storage option may also help simplify operations for a construction company, *Constructech* magazine reports.² A project team that uses several databases to store information may be creating unnecessary work for its members if data is being entered multiple times—or, in some cases, omitted—and if it takes more time and effort just to find a piece of information.

The green factor

More companies are moving away from paper and digitizing functions, from payroll to invoicing to project management. One reason is the business world's focus on cutting down waste and reducing costs by adopting environmentally friendly paperless processes.

According to the United Nations Environment Program, industrialized nations contain 20 percent of the world's population but consume 87 percent of the world's printing and writing papers. The cost of actually using paper—taking electricity and ink into account—is actually 13 to 31 times the initial price of the paper itself.³

Eliminating paper-based processes can help a company reduce its costs on paper, ink, toner, and expensive maintenance and repair of copiers and printers. Digitizing paper files also means businesses that are short on space do not have to spend as much on off-site storage units. In addition to cutting overhead, this option makes it easier for employees to access information, no matter where they are located.

Build a paperless process and easily store and route critical documents for approval

- Project management documents including contracts, pictures, and change orders
- HR forms
- Service work orders
- Purchase requisition
- Plans and drawings for estimating take-off
- General ledger adjustment entries
- Daily mail

Electronic forms

Using paperless document management solutions, you can design and deliver electronic forms to your employees on their smartphones, tablets, or desktop.

Example forms:

- Daily reports
- Punch lists
- Purchase requisitions
- Job photos
- Vacation requests
- Payroll timesheets
- Expense reports
- Equipment inspection reports

² http://www.constructech.com/news/articles/article.aspx?article_id=8476

³ <https://www.greenamerica.org/PDF/PaperFacts.pdf>

Advantages of paperless document management

Electronic document management systems do away with the time-consuming process of sifting through paper files at the risk of discovering the document was not properly put away by the last person to pull it. EDM systems allow files to be recalled at the click of a mouse while providing information on when and by whom the file was last viewed and/or marked up.

Documents can be scanned and stored to create an electronic database accessible to users across an enterprise. Cloud-based EDM systems can also allow out-of-office users to access company- and project-related documents through a wireless connection.

Document management systems can be useful for every department within a construction company. The accounting office can better track revenue and expenses by being able to pair order forms with resulting bills from suppliers and store receipts, and project managers can share updated blueprints instantly with on-site supervisors.

EDM systems also help companies make sure confidential information is protected and can ensure compliance with legal regulations. Additionally, because files are computer based, electronically backing up files can help reduce the risk of losing important documents in the event of a fire or natural disaster.

Simplify processes and eliminate the paper chase with electronic document management

In order to encourage more efficient operations, electronic document management gives customers a web-based solution for managing and sharing workflows, documents, and conversations among members of project teams. You can automate your routing and approval processes to improve communications and confidently manage critical documents such as invoices.

Electronic document management provides more control over your content with an easy way to store, retrieve, and route documents throughout your organization. The software centralizes all project-related information and documents in a secure, online location through a software-as-a-service model. No matter where team members are located—in the office, at the job site, or in another country—everyone can access the data and track changes on the shared platform.

Benefits of document management

- **Save time** by eliminating the paper chase and wasted effort looking for lost or misplaced files.
- **Improve productivity** by providing easier access to company- and project-related documents.
- **Increase efficiency** across your organization with automated document distribution and invoice approval processes.
- **Make payments prompt and easier to track** so you can build stronger relationships with subcontractors.
- **Eliminate the need for paper files** and their storage fees.

Electronic document management also aligns with many companies' efforts to go green, as it allows team members to share ideas and conduct research without having to print, reproduce, distribute, and store numerous paper files over the course of one project. The solution allows for greater visibility into the project management process, with the storage and invoicing of documents and the option to establish rules-based routing.

Finally, your staff can receive automatic notifications and alerts based upon user criteria. You can establish return dates, monitor route progress, and review status of routed content.

Conclusion

Whether a project lasts two weeks or spans months, no matter if the team consists of three members or dozens, an electronic document management system can help construction firms keep track of the documents, reports, and more from the initial planning through execution phases. EDM software can help ensure that no project member misses out on key information, and you can regain control over critical processes.

For more information, contact your Sage business partner or customer account manager at 800-858-7095.

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