Document Locator®

A Smart Strategy

Eight ways to be more efficient, cut costs, avoid financial risk, and be green with electronic document management.

Bottom-line benefits

Focusing on how to improve existing operations is a forward-thinking strategy. One way to accomplish this; Capitalize on improvements to everyday job functions, making them more efficient and accurate.

Consider how your organization manages information. When you look at the facts, electronic document management may offer more value than you realize. From faster search and retrieval, to automating business processes, to more control over regulated or proprietary information - document management improves how your organization interacts with and controls information… leading to greater efficiency, cost savings, and lower risk.

1 Find information, instantly

Research has shown that more than 50% of business professionals spend approximately 2 hours a day searching for the information they need to do their jobs.

Electronic document management, with its indexing of content and flexible search capabilities, offers a better alternative than personal folders, unorganized shared directories, or paper storage by trimming the time it takes to retrieve information.

With the ability to find files instantly based on full-text searches of content as well as any combination of profile data (metadata), valuable time that might otherwise be spent searching for information is instead focused on more productive business matters.

WWW Search and Retrieval

> *In the past we have had papers misfiled that took four hours to find. I am sure we can find any papers we need now in a matter of minutes.*
>
> Tom Horn,
> Document Locator Customer, Al Angelo Company

The cost of information retrieval may surprise you.

1. It can take 5 minutes or more to file and retrieve a paper document.
2. Multiply the average filing time by the number of people and the total time spent adds up.
3. Multiply all the time spent by the average labor cost and the cost of information retrieval may surprise you.

2 Automate business processes

Paper-based business processes are prone to errors, delays, and duplications caused by any number of user-influenced circumstances. These manually-based processes are also difficult to manage for accountability and control.

Electronic document workflow is a core component of document management that automates the flow of information in business processes within defined, repeatable, and audit-traceable steps. It improves how people interact within a process by regulating the dynamic and complex flow of information. People can focus their time and intelligence on decisions within the process… and not on pushing paper.

WWW Document Workflow

Records and processes that are governed by regulatory requirements must be managed to avoid financial liability. Defining and automating business steps in compliance with rules, laws and standards helps to avoid penalties, fines, and legal actions.

" *…Improve every process: Improve constantly and forever every process for planning, production, and service. Search continually for problems in order to improve every activity in the company, to improve quality and productivity, and thus to constantly decrease costs. Institute innovation and constant improvement of product, service, and process. It is management's job to work continually on the system…* "

3 Collaborate

Sharing information on corporate file servers and using email to send files back and forth is an uncontrolled and chaotic way of business. All too often files are duplicated or lost, and versions multiply without end. This unstructured approach is an inefficient way to share information, often leaves people guessing where to get the latest files, and offers very little protection for the security of company knowledge.

Document management establishes a secure platform for collaboration that unifies knowledge sharing, allowing the collective intelligence of a team to be leveraged by all. Information is easily retrieved, documented, and available for re-use. People inside the office, as well as employees, vendors, or customers outside the office or at satellite locations can all securely access and share information.

A platform for collaboration ends the chaos, giving everyone easy access to the information they need from within a controlled environment that protects intellectual property.

WWW Document Management

> " The value of a network grows exponentially by the square of its number of connections. "
>
> Metcalfe's Law
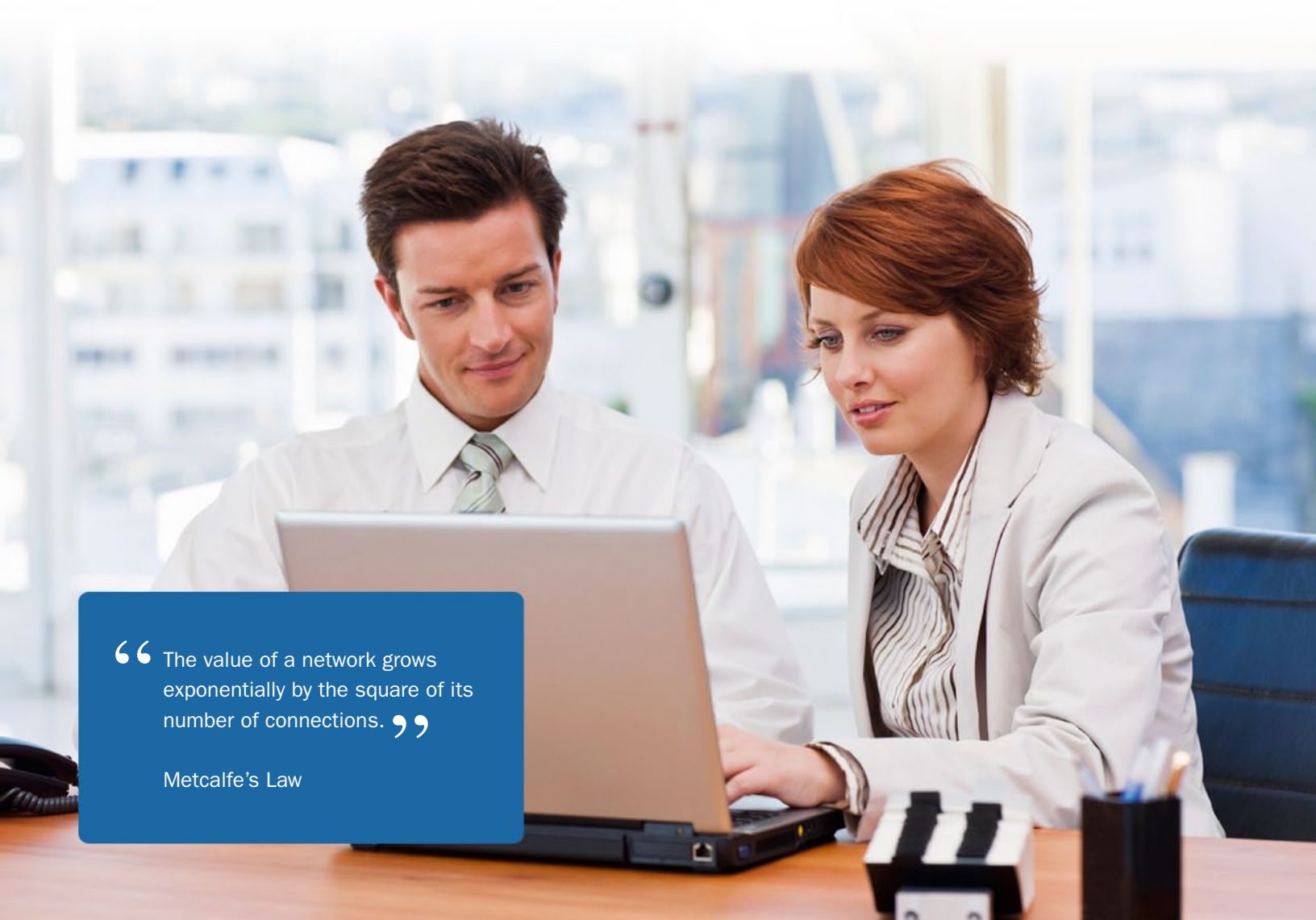
4 A record of every change

Documents are not static. The content within documents change over time in lifecycles that include everything from collaborative development, to reviews and approvals, to future revisions, and so on. Without a standardized system for versioning, information in previous versions will be lost or difficult to retrieve.

Document version control is a systematic, automated approach that captures every change in a document and builds a version history log. It replaces ad-hoc methods, such as file-naming schemes that often vary among different people, with a single automated system. Current document versions are easily identifiable, and all prior versions are readily retrievable.

With version control in place, the risk of losing prior document versions is avoided and the cost of recreating lost files is eliminated.

WWW   **Version Control**

> " Companies that need to redo documents, pay 11
> times more than the cost of the original document. "
>
> Coopers & Lybrand

5 Reduce the risk of Email

Email is the preferred form of communication at most businesses, with the average employee receiving over 80 messages per day. It's fast, inexpensive, convenient, and widely perceived as informal. Emails are, however, business records.

Email records are increasingly coming under the regulatory scrutiny of SEC, FDA, Sarbanes-Oxley, FRCP and other regulations. Plus, in a team-oriented environment, access to information in emails may go beyond concerns for compliance. Very often, the content of email is important to more than just one person.

Capturing email records and attachments establishes an email archive, unified with a document management system, that allows for quick research and retrieval of email records. Financial risk in eDiscovery, legal actions, and compliance matters are greatly reduced, while team-members can easily access project-related messages.

WWW **Email Archive**

The average information worker spends more than one-third of their time, about 15 hours per week (more than all other tasks) using email to create and exchange content.

6 Regulatory compliance

Government regulations, quality standards, and legal requirements are a growing concern for many organizations. Systems that help manage compliance standards by defining policies and procedures, applying consistent business practices, securing information, and building an audit trail are necessary to avoid financial risk.

Electronic records policies provide the document control procedures needed to manage regulated content and processes where quality standards and compliance are an issue, such as with ISO, FDA, Sarbanes-Oxley, etc. Workflows, approvals, audit logs, electronic signatures, and security all work in tandem to improve the management of compliance programs. Electronic polices also shorten the auditing process by reducing the time it takes to verify procedures.

WWW Records Management

7 Eliminate storage costs

Storing paper documents in filing cabinets, archive boxes, or off-site warehouses is an unnecessary expense that adds no value to business. Office square footage consumed by rows of filing cabinets could be used as productive work areas, and money spent for warehouse space could be invested in other more productive areas of business.

Electronic document storage unlocks valuable work space and eliminates costly off-site storage fees. Plus, the ability to instantly save and retrieve files from electronic repositories offers the added bonus of improving productivity by reducing time spent filing and retrieving information. Electronic document storage also makes it easier to plan for business continuity and disaster recovery.

WWW Document Storage

> " Hard drives are cheaper than warehouses. "
>
> ColumbiaSoft customer,
> David Corbin,
> State Mutual Life & Health.

70% of businesses would fail within three weeks if they suffered a catastrophic loss of paper-based records.

8 Be green

The average office worker uses a sheet of paper every 12 minutes, over 10,000 sheets of paper a year, and disposes of 100 to 200 pounds of paper annually.

Reducing the use of paper is a cost-saving, environmentally sustainable best-practice. Transitioning to paperless saves trees, reduces energy usage in the manufacture and shipping of paper, eliminates mailing and delivery of paper documents, reduces the need for paper storage, and more. And while having positive impact on the environment, reducing the use of paper also leads to cost savings through improved efficiency.

WWW Paperless Office

If businesses cut paper usage by just 10%, it would lower the emission of greenhouse gasses by 1.6 million tons – the equivilant of taking 280,000 cars off the road.

ColumbiaSoft™

ColumbiaSoft is a leading provider of document management solutions.

Since 1998, we have helped businesses across a range of industries operate more efficiently, reduce risk, and improve collaboration using our intuitive document management software. We deliver best-practices solutions, connected with the business applications that people use every day. By leveraging integration with Microsoft technology, our software delivers comprehensive capabilities while remaining easy to use and affordably priced.

Contact us to learn more.

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