

Case Study



Palm Beach Community College: ECM and Point-of-Entry Scanning Improves Student Services and HR

Palm Beach Community College (PBCC) serves approximately 47,000 students across four campuses located within the Florida hurricane zone. Due to their location, disaster recovery played a big part—as did the need for space and improved efficiency—in their search for an enterprise content management (ECM) system.

Business Needs

By 2006, they had experienced two failed attempts at implementing an ECM system. They approached the project again, this time hiring a consultant and building a business plan. With multiple locations—some an hour apart—PBCC was often constrained by the limitations of paper. The need for simultaneous access to information without faxes and phone calls was apparent.

“Students are our number one priority. We wanted to implement measures to serve them more efficiently, with faster turnaround time,” said Chuck Zettler, Director of Information Technology Project Management at PBCC. “As we explored ECM options, we realized that if we implemented workflow we could distribute work to staff across the multi-campus environment.”

To get the information into the system, PBCC would need scanners throughout its campuses. “We looked at different scanning companies, and measured their capabilities against a number of criteria that were essential to our business processes. Obviously the quality of the scan was crucial. We also looked at the ability to handle odd- and mixed-size documents, auto feed, duplex scanning, color scanning, twain imaging, and other factors.”

Solution

After careful evaluation of their options, PBCC found an integrated solution that met all of their requirements: the DocFinity software suite from Optical Image Technology and Fujitsu scanners.

The ECM software offered the scalability for successful implementation both departmentally and enterprise-wide. A professional services team offered on-site support in order to ensure success. Zettler explains the process. A backfile conversion enabled everything to be in digital format when they went live.

The Registrar’s office, Admissions, and Financial Aid were the first to adopt the technology. By simply handing their student ID to a staff member to be scanned, the student’s information could be automatically imported on site from the DocFinity system. 65 Fujitsu scanners were eventually placed on

desktops, counters, mail stations, and throughout the Human Resources department across all four campuses.

Zettler explains, “Since we have to scan a photo id for every student and employee, we wanted a scanner that we could feed a driver’s license and that would scan a color image. We’re currently using the Fujitsu fi-6130 model. The scanners require minimal support, and we’ve been extremely pleased with their capabilities.”

Benefits

Zettler says that the ECM system has been particularly valuable to the Financial Aid office. “One of the most labor-intensive and cumbersome processes for students and is Verification, which is a federal requirement to collect several pieces of financial and personal information from students and/or parents.” Rather than waiting for all components of a package to be received – and relocated to one location – documents can be scanned individually at any of the four campuses and routed electronically to the correct processor before final submittal.

Enhancing Human Resources

Zettler says, “We’re also able to image-enable HR documents using our network of Fujitsu scanners. Paper documents are scanned and indexed at the point of receipt, and accessible immediately to authorized personnel from any web browser.”

PBCC has approximately 2,600 employees and experience constant turnover, which accounts for a voluminous number of HR-related documents.

Zettler elaborates, “Our HR folders are larger and more complex than student records. Student files may contain eight to ten pages, but HR files may be comprised of fifty to sixty pages on average. Nonetheless, they can be imaged and stored in the same electronic repository that houses student records.”

PBCC uses DocFinity to store current employment records, as well as all of their historical employment records. All employment applications, W-2 forms, and other HR documents are scanned into the system and stored.

PBCC integrated DocFinity with their PeopleAdmin system where prospective employees view job openings and post their résumés and other related documents. Once candidates are selected for employment, their information is automatically transferred to DocFinity to be stored. This is a vast improvement over the previous manual process of printing and filing each résumé.

Now that HR has adopted the enterprise content management system, PBCC is able to share documents electronically across their multi-campus environment. This speeds up the hiring process and enables each department to have access to the information they need.

Relevance to other educational institutions

PBCC has imaged and stored approximately 2.5 million documents to date. Their success with ECM serves as a valuable lesson to other organizations. Zettler summarizes, “The Fujitsu distributed scanning component of our DocFinity implementation has great relevance to other institutions. When information is scanned as soon as it is received, it is accessible immediately to authorized users throughout the entire enterprise.”

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