



Sample ECM Implementation Plan

In our Paperless seminars we typically review the best practice process for building your migration plan. In this review we discuss the importance of reviewing your physical infrastructure, reviewing workflow processes, and creating a structure to store you files. We also recommend that you remove expired and unwanted files before migrating existing files to the new file structure. All of this is good information, but it is difficult for many people to sit in front of a blank screen and developing your working written plan. This sample plan is intended, not to be a complete plan, but to help you get started on yours. It is in a PDF format as an internationally recognized file format, but is not restricted, so you may copy and paste from this documents into your word processor of choice and then change and expand it to create your tailored implementation plan.

Creating Your Plan

The possible implementation plans for Enterprise Content Management are as varied as there are businesses. Since our audience is a mix of accountants in industry and accountants in practice, our job is even more difficult. However, these obstacles do not lessen the need for some written examples. The following is a real implementation plan that has been heavily edited as an outline to follow. This is simply a guide and is intended as a place to start. If this guide is too general for you, and more detail is desired, there are a number of white papers and examples available on the Internet. Search on Content Management Implementation Plan or Enterprise Content Management Plan for links to industry and governmental examples.

Phase I Clean Up and Training Tasks

There are a number of tasks to be accomplished to prepare the office and staff to work exclusively with electronic documents versus paper documents. Many of the tasks may be executed concurrently, and where there is some dependence between tasks, it is so noted.

All Time-to-Completion dates are estimates only and are dependent on start date, management's approval of the task item, assignment of appropriate staff to execute, and resources. Revise the time to implement to fit your staff estimates.

Task: Identify Training Materials and Assign a Training Coordinator.

The time for completion of this task is from 45 – 60 days for a mid-size department with 100-200 processes and 15-30 staff.

In order to create new work flow processes and to train staff, a person must be identified to be the Training Coordinator (TC) for this project. The TC for the project must be adequately trained and understand the tools well enough to instruct others. She/he must also have a solid understanding of the organizational workflow as it exists at the time and of the tasks that are done by each individual impacted. Therefore, this may also involve the TC interviewing staff and spending some time flowcharting workflow processes to determine how these processes are executed. These diagrams are called the AS IS DIAGRAMS. The TC then develops a series of TO BE DIAGRAMS which depict the workflow for the same processes using digital documents. The TC reviews these diagrams with users, so that they fully understand the changes being considered in order to provide input as well as approval. This is also the time to develop a level of confidence and commitment on the part of the users so they know they will not be “thrown” into a new environment that will adversely affect them or their job. Once the TC and users are in agreement, the TC and management review the TO BE DIAGRAMS and revise as appropriate.

While this may sound initially like a long convoluted process, it does not have to be. The flow diagrams may be as general or as detailed as is sufficient to clearly display the workflow. The diagrams are simple rectangles (tasks), diamonds (questions), and connector lines. Small circles show where a report, form, or task leaves one area and travels to another. The receiving workflow has a small circle with an indicator that data is entering that process. We recommend that the TC use a software tool such as Microsoft VISIO to create the flow charts for ease of changing and reviewing.

The TC may also need the time and resources to learn the applications to be used and to prepare for the above mentioned training. This may impact the total time to completion and should be figured into timeline estimates. Initially, start with Adobe Acrobat Professional. Professional includes the form tool and other tools the organization may need. There are a number of books available from www.amazon.com, as well as inexpensive on-line training from www.lynda.com. Give the TC enough time to become knowledgeable. If the TC has other duties she/he normally performs, the TC will have to be given the appropriate time to succeed with the assignment. This may mean shifting some of the TC’s current duties or extending the length of the project to accommodate.

The TC will determine what training will be needed for each user and how to best create and distribute this training. Users must understand the seriousness of each training exercise and be held responsible. We recommend that after each training exercise, there be a short exam of five to eight questions that demonstrate that the user understands the content and is ready for the next step.

Adobe Portable Data Format (PDF) file format is a standard for digital documents and is much easier with which to work than Tagged Information Format (TIF) files. PDF files also more closely represent the original document. As noted, there are many books available on the subject. A few with which we are familiar includes:

- *Adobe Acrobat 8 How-Tos: 125 Essential Techniques* by Donna L. Baker,
- *Creating Adobe Acrobat Forms with CDRom* by Ted Padova, and
- *Adobe Acrobat 8 PDF Bible* by Ted Padova.

In all cases, a beginning date and ending date for this and all tasks should be agreed upon and assigned so that there is commitment and a responsibility to complete each task within the assigned time. It is management's responsibility to follow-up and track the project as it develops throughout the completion of each task.

Task: Scrub Servers and Systems

The time for completion of this task is 30 - 45 days.

Management of large volumes of data requires a structured approach. A significant percentage of the data files stored on existing servers and workstations are either not directly related to business or represent expired data. A key component of the "Paperless Office" initiative is to create more digital documents for storage and to back these files up electronically to a remote site. Removing unnecessary files and having a realistic retention policy for all documents are critical to this process to avoid paying to backup and store documents that are not necessary to the business. Therefore, prior to setting up a new folder structure to manage information collectively (single folder structure), all data folders must be purged of unnecessary and expired files.

Someone should be assigned to review all server/user directories, identify suspect files, and target them for removal. All such files may be collected in folders on the Image server and then moved to writeable DVDs to be filed. In the unlikely event that an active file is inadvertently identified and removed, it can be restored from optical media.

Staff should be instructed to assist in the project by removing all non-business related files from servers and systems and by moving files which are expired to the designated folders for archiving to optical disk and deletion. Should you determine it is appropriate to allow users to store personal files on company owned equipment, I recommend you create a Personal/User/ username folder structure independent of business related data, map employees to this folder tree, and instruct them that such files are to be placed in this area, that they will not be backed up, and that personal files will be purged annually.

We believe that this practice of storing personal files should be discouraged, but if you elect to do so, it is important to maintain such information in a completely separate environment to minimize liability. You may also wish to discuss potential liability and risk you may be incurring with legal counsel.

We recommend that you publish a policy that no data files will be maintained on individual workstations (desktop or laptop) and that all files are to be stored to the server unless specifically approved by higher level management. IT can route all desktops: right click on **My Documents**, select **Target** tab, select **Move** button, browse to and select the appropriate folder on the server as the destination for all **My Document** files from that point forward. This will easily ensure that staff is storing documents in the appropriate folder. There are some users, such as the controller or personnel director, who may require sensitive documents to be locally stored. When this is the case, create a My Data folder on the local workstation to specifically store those documents. It is the user's responsibility to ensure that these documents are protected and backed up.

Task: Creation of a Common File Folder Structure

The time for completion of this task is 45 days.

One of the defined objectives is to maintain all data files and records in a single location versus multiple softcopy and hardcopy files currently maintained by each department. The benefit would be more rapid access to information and more efficient cost effective management of data and reporting.

A folder structure will be created on an Image server, and current files will be moved into folders from existing folders. If a folder structure is used at this time, it will be moved into the appropriate tree structure. Management will agree upon a centralized folder structure and instruct a technologist to assist in the creation and migration process.

Once the servers are scrubbed, and the new file structure is created, a technician will begin scanning the historical file paper documents and files to store these scanned images into the appropriate electronic folders. A product such as Omegadocs, www.omegadocs.com, may help in the bulk filing process. Omegadocs generates labels that can be placed between scanned documents as separators to speed the scanning and filing process. A single license and label printer runs approximately \$395, but this product would greatly speed up the initial bulk load of paper documents.

The above outlined tasks are an interim step to implementing a full Document Management software solution. Any Enterprise Content Management (ECM) solution will require such a folder structure to be in place. By cleaning up and organizing existing files, you have taken the first step in becoming familiar with the folder structure and in fine-tuning the system to fit your needs. Once a formal Document Management system is implemented in Phase II, it will be much more difficult and costly to change the folder structure at a later time.

On a regular basis, documents that have reached the end of their economic life or life cycle may be burned to CD or DVD, the media copied, and a copy of the media stored in a remote location, while one copy is maintained at the data center or a secure vault for access as required. A similar process may be used for other documents, such as monthly financial statements, Payroll and Check runs, and so forth.

As a part of this task, management must review, update, and train all staff on a company-wide Records Retention Policy (RRP). The RRP is absolutely necessary and defines not only how long files are to be maintained before they are retired but also how the retirement process will occur. An example might be three years on local server hard disk and five years on optical media (CD or DVD) before media is purged (destroyed). The RRP also defines how long the hardcopy is to be maintained after being scanned, if at all. This might be 24 hours after scan verification or up to 13 months if management feels that it is necessary.

Phase I Scanning and Storage Tasks

A critical component of the Strategic Technology Plan is the imaging of paper documents and storage of these documents to media. Those tasks identified above are intended to prepare the environment for such activity, to train staff on the tools to be used, and to clean up data storage areas. This group of tasks focuses on the activities of regularly scanning, storing, and retrieving documents.

Task: Procedures for Scanning and Storage of Forms and Other Documents

The time for completion of this task is 60 days.

Once the file structure and procedures for retrieval are in place, either staff or temporary help will scan all identified hardcopy documents to digital format, verify scan, index, and store. These documents will then be packed and placed in storage for a determined period of time and then destroyed.

Task: Convert from Paper to Digital Facsimile Machines

The time to completion of this task is 30 days. (The task start date is dependent on the creation of a common file structure and installation of additional digital fax phone lines, if required.)

Utilize electronic facsimile machines to receive and send faxes to and from the desktop. This will drastically reduce the time to send and retrieve paper as well as toner and paper costs.

IT will review current procedures and recipients and acquire the appropriate hardware. IT will connect the digital facsimile machine to the network and install the user interface.

Task: Set All Printers and Scanners to Appropriate DPI Resolution

The time to completion of this task is 5 days.

All printers and scanners are assumed to be set to factory standard which is their highest resolution. Unless it is an area that is printing or scanning very high resolution images, this wastes significant toner and time. Setting the Dots Per Inch (DPI) resolution to 600 or less will cut this cost drastically.

IT will review all printer and scanner settings and work with end-users to define and set appropriate lower settings. In some cases, newer laser printers have a Save mode that reduces toner usage as well.

Phase II Selecting an Automated ECM Solution

While we have discussed in Phase I the tasks to prepare for paperless and provided examples, this is only a preparatory phase. There are many who stop at this point and therefore miss out on many of the benefits and economic returns possible. There are also those who bypass Phase I, particularly the clean up tasks, believing that a software vendor will take care of these tasks and make the process less painful. This is absolutely not true. If a business fails to review documents and scrub, or remove, files no longer needed, these tend to be incorporated into a new folder structure established by the software application vendor or installer. For more than thirty years, we have had a very simple expression in the computer business – Garbage in Garbage out (GIGO). No matter how small or fast computers become or how much data we store, GIGO is still as relevant today as ever, and, because of the volumes of files we maintain, it is perhaps even more relevant.

Therefore, we recommend that before embarking on the review and selection of a fully automated ECM solution that you complete Phase I. This is largely because of the degree of chaos and lack of published standards. If a business embarks on an ECM box solution without first “cleaning house,” the result is often chaotic and much more expensive-- if the project is ever successful. Once the documents have been organized, scanning has been completed, and the staff has been using a manual system for a short period of time, the next step will be to identify and implement a completely automated and structured system.

There are many software solutions for ECM, from large business to small, and we will provide you best-of-breed options by industry size and type later in this presentation. However, like accounting software, ECM solutions are just as varied and the selection process just as confusing. ECM is not simply ECM: it is not even called by the same name.

Components of Paperless Office Software

There are several components to paperless office solutions. First, you will most likely not see a paperless office solution advertised as a “Paperless Solution.” The term paperless is more commonly used to encompass a general concept. Paperless software applications are most commonly referred to as Content Management Software (CMS) or Enterprise Content Management (ECM), the term we have used in this handout. You will also hear the terms Electronic File Cabinet (EFC) and Workflow Management (WM). As is true with any emerging technology, acronyms abound, and you should have a general understanding of the terms and acronyms used in order to make a sound decision.

At the lowest level of implementation (think of it as the foundation) you have Electronic File Cabinet (EFC) solutions. These solutions are typically low cost and provide minimal functionality and feature set. EFC solutions provide for scanning images and presenting them for viewing and editing. Editing includes various forms of annotation, which we will discuss later, and indexing and filing of the document.

Most EFC solutions use the host operating system file structure or network operating system file structure to file away the document. Adobe Acrobat is a very simple example of this functionality. Other applications use the operating system file structure in conjunction with some type of database to store an index pointing to the physical documents stored. Examples of these solutions include products such as PaperPort and efilecabinet. Such solutions are fairly sparse in terms of added features but cost much less than higher-end solutions with lots of features you may not use.

These solutions may be appropriate if you work with a small volume of documents or if you are scanning and storing mass numbers of documents that require little or no organized file organization. W-9 forms or shipping documents are examples where the intent is simply short term storage (say less than 18 months), and then the documents expire. With these types of documents, you are storing the image just in case a problem arises. There is a high probability that you may not need to access the form unless there is a problem or unless litigation occurs. For these types of documents, the objective is to reduce the cost of handling and storing the physical documents.

For more detail recommendations of Paperless solutions, visit www.TotallyPaperless.com

This concludes our sample plan document.