

Ricoh malaysia deploys document management software

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LIFE WITH LESS FILING CABINETS IS MORE EFFICIENT, UNIFYING, EVEN “ BEAUTIFUL”...

A pioneer in digital office equipment since 1936, Ricoh offers a broad range of networked products, including copiers, printers and fax machines as well as digital cameras. Ricoh Malaysia, with 310 employees and six branches, provides document management solutions for clients in the banking, services, government, education and other sectors. Ricoh Malaysia is one of several sales and service locations in the Asia/Pacific region. With 395 consolidated subsidiaries worldwide, Ricoh employs approximately 75, 000 people with total sales of \$17 billion and holds top market share for plain paper copiers in Europe and Japan and the second highest market share in the United States. THE CHALLENGE Don't plan on taking your filing cabinets with you.

Imagine receiving that notice from the managing director shortly before your company's move to a new office location. Ricoh Malaysia employees who were accustomed to manual, paper-based processes had a few months to scan or shred virtually all business-critical documents relating to sales, service and customers. It was a scramble, but not even close to inevitable challenges if the company were to continue outdated, time- and resource-consuming methods. What was the Ricoh office like before Captaris Alchemy? It looked like any other business struggling to deal with the high volume of letters, faxes and forms generated by 10, 000+ clients. If you dropped by the service department you were likely to find service requests lying around; if you visited any manager in finance, you would notice two or three overflowing filing cabinets. The same held true for the human

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resources team, however, you'd also have to step over boxes spread across half the room.

Finally, if you trudged upstairs to the backlog file room, a space close to 100 square feet, you would be surrounded by folders packed with customer information and internal and external documents relating to delivery, cost margins, payment vouchers and so on. Many of the documents required signature, most demanded seven-year storage for legal purposes and everything had a separate folder, according to Rajashree Jayaraman, manager of Technology Development for Ricoh Malaysia. " It could take 30 minutes to an hour every time an employee retrieved needed files," she explained. " They had to walk up to the file room, search for the document, get it, and then go back to their desks an average of four to five times per day, per person." In addition, our misfiling hindered business. " Documents could go missing for some time," Jayaraman said.

" We usually managed to find them after as much as a month, but it could mean quite a bit of damage with every day documents." THE SOLUTIONSeveral months after installing Captaris Alchemy integrated with Ricoh's own scanner and multi-function device, Ricoh Malaysia has scanned and archived more than 200, 000 documents, close to 80 percent of the information previously stored as hard copies. It estimates a 70 percent reduction in storage space and an exciting turnaround for retrieving files, physical transport that took up to 60 minutes is now immediately and electronically available within three seconds. Spearheaded by Managing Director Lim Eng Weng—who now jokes he will issue a summons to any

employee creating paper files—the vision and passion for efficient document management has spread across the company. “ With 310 employees to manage, the small HR department was happy when we launched Alchemy,” Jayaraman said. “ It has freed up the equivalent of one staff member by eliminating the time spent searching through paper records.

We now store all the personnel files in Alchemy and set the access right for every supervisor so they can review his or her own staff files online.” The finance department maintains immediate access to critical files and the service department is now able to answer questions or issues in real-time.” The most important thing is how we’ve improved access to information and reduced paper in the office,” Lim Chuan Wee, technical consultant with Ricoh Malaysia said. As a result, employees are redeployed to more profitable tasks and customers receive efficient service. On top of everything else, the aesthetics of a virtually paperless office carries its own appeal, according to Jayaraman.

“ The new office is beautiful—no papers and cabinets in every corner,” she said. “ Others may visit and think, ‘ Are people really working?’ They are impressed when we tell them we’re scanning documents and using Alchemy; we’re living well and quite happy.”” One (competing product) took a few minutes to return documents, another was close to Alchemy with 10 seconds, but it appeared difficult to use and not as user-friendly or stable as Alchemy.” Rajashree Jayaraman, manager of Technology Development for Ricoh Malaysia. THE RESULTSRefocused staff, faster service? With web-

based access to files, employees from the headquarters building or even six outlying branches can access files without traveling to the file room.

The company saves time and money by redeploying staff to other areas, according to Jayaraman. While the technology team is waiting to calculate full ROI until all backlog documents are scanned, Jayaraman referred to early payback, “ Intangible benefits are definitely visible, Alchemy offers speed and usability. That itself is a big ROI.” Ricoh Malaysia evaluated three document management solutions before choosing Alchemy. The team ran all three systems simultaneously and compared retrieval time.

“ The other two were quite slow,” Jayaraman explained. “ One took a few minutes to return documents, another was close to Alchemy with 10 seconds, but it appeared difficult to use and not as user-friendly or stable as Alchemy.” The team paired Alchemy with a Ricoh scanner that processes 45 pages per minute and a Ricoh MFP that proves especially useful for managing carbon copy documents. Unity, consistency? Alchemy supports a hot-desking concept developed by the Ricoh Malaysia team. Since sales staff members are no longer tied to cabinets and paper stacked on desks, they are able to sit anywhere, plug their laptops into any port and access email along with all necessary documents. “ We have achieved department unity as groups share information across teams and work in an integrated way,” Jayaraman said.

Scanning and storing will continue until all departments are assigned and entered into Alchemy. Ricoh Malaysia plans to integrate DataGrabber to pull information and make it available via portal. In the move to its new office,

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Ricoh Malaysia's managing director did allow one small filing cabinet for managers and one for staff, but—with Alchemy—there is not much to put in them. Jayaraman laughed, “ It is a nice place to put bags.”