

case study



Penn Stainless Products, Inc. ROI Strong as Steel

This global stainless steel producer and distributor implemented DocuWare to securely manage financial documents and link accounting information with product test reports. Today, the company can better manage production costs and has improved employee productivity and customer service now that information is securely filed. The best part - DocuWare's ROI was realized within the first year.

Penn Stainless Products, Inc., founded in 1949, is a global distributor of custom specified flat rolled, bar, structural and tubular stainless steel products. With over \$140 million a year in revenue, Penn Stainless Products (PSP) is a mid-sized player in the stainless industry.

Documents

With over 9,000 customers and double digit annual growth, PSP needed a more efficient document management system. Information was shared between 60 employees and searching for information was tedious because documents were subject to slow refiling and misfiling. In addition, the company needed to reference each invoice with the heat or test report for the product specified.

Work Process

When a new account is created, a credit file consisting of references, applications, Dun & Bradstreet™ reports and tax reports is established. Credit files are only accessed by a few employees but are extremely important to maintain and have a long document life.

The accounting information also operated on a paper based system. Besides the accounting and sales teams, management needed access to this information. With so many individuals working with the financial information, each employee lost an average of an hour a day just filing and searching for paper files.

Misfiled documents were an especially critical issue. In order to resolve a product problem, a sales rep needed to review the metal's specifications. This meant a search for the invoice to find the heat or test report reference number and look up the actual report in a separate system. Since a metal bar may end up being processed into several different orders, a copy of the test report was frequently stored with each invoice to improve information access. This duplication of the report throughout the A/R files contributed to the company's need for more file space. A missing invoice made it nearly impos-

sible to find the heat report reference number and access the technical information about each product, hindering PSP's ability to provide the highest level of customer service.

Solution Requirements

PSP needed to implement an electronic document management system that would work well with its large volume of documents and allow documents to be indexed by multiple criteria. They wanted to secure the access to these files and ensure documents would not be lost due to human error or natural disaster. Additionally, they wanted to reduce document storage space and expand their office space without adding on to the building.

Solution

Altek Business Systems, Inc., an Authorized DocuWare Partner, implemented DocuWare as PSP's electronic document management system. The solution also included the implementation of three Kodak i1220 scanners and one Kodak i65 scanner.



The Task

- Electronically secure a large volume of documents
- Index accounting documents with product test reports
- Improve information quality and availability
- Gain office space, by reducing document storage needs

Appointed Modules

- ACTIVE IMPORT

The Benefits

- Better management of production costs
- Self-serve read only access to accounting documents, improved employee productivity and customer service
- Avoided expansion costs by eliminating paper-based document storage
- Reduced legal exposure and improved the audit process through securely filed electronic information



DocuWare was rolled out in the credit department as a test phase. Using temporary help, credit files were scanned and indexed. The company was so pleased with the time savings on the retrieval side alone that DocuWare was rolled out in the Accounting department. Today, accounting information such as invoices, bills of lading and work orders are scanned, organized and stored in DocuWare. By indexing documents with multiple index criteria, cross-referencing invoices with vital heat reports is easily accomplished. Since documentation is now handled electronically, there have been no more lost documents.

Benefits in Detail

User Benefits

Currently at least 60 people have access to the information stored in DocuWare. Sales reps can easily verify a past order or check a customer's credit standing without ever leaving their desk. Quick access to an invoice provides the heat report number for instant access to the actual report. No more wasted time or distraction from paper files. Management has immediate access to informa-

tion to easily check if product was cut, cost and billed correctly, allowing them to better manage production costs.

Department Benefits

By eliminating the paper file cabinets from the Accounting department, they were able to downsize their office space and move to a second floor loft area. In turn the sales and purchasing teams were relocated to this new found office space and can now sit together as a department allowing them to be more organized, effective and productive, with room to expand. Finding documents from the desktop has also improved morale. Not having to refile documents has made employees truly happy.

"With our old paper-based system we never would have been able to bring our sales and purchasing teams together. Having them work more closely has really increased our sales efforts. And not having to build more office space has saved us thousands. DocuWare has really provided us the tool we needed to grow our company while eliminating a lot of the costs associated with growth," said Dave Harris, Controller for PSP.

Corporate Benefits

Many benefits have been realized on the corporate level by moving from paper to digital files. Legal exposure is under control since they now have quick and easy access to test reports. With instant access to information, customer inquires are handled while on the phone, improving customer service.

Now that auditors can be given login credentials to access electronic information, audits (including those performed by the Department of Homeland Security) are quicker, easier and much more cost effective; saving them tens of thousands of dollars and a lot of stress on preparation.

"Our Return on Investment was more about improving the way our employees work. Our sales team is at their desks much more, spending more time making sales calls rather than searching and filing paper. That documents are never lost and no one has to do any refileing is huge around here. Within one year the system has more than paid for itself," said Harris.

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*Dave Harris
Controller for PSP*



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