

# case study



## Radiology Associates of San Antonio A/R Department Improves Cash Flow

*Since implementing DocuWare, Radiology Associates' A/R department has improved productivity by 25-30%, increasing cash flow and impacting the bottom line. Today, patient questions and insurance payment issues can be resolved fast because needed information is instantly available. Best of all RA received a return on their investment in just over a year.*

Radiology Associates of San Antonio (RA) is a physician owned radiology practice that has been in business for over 40 years. The practice is comprised of 22 physicians and a staff of over 230 medical and business personnel who together provide radiology services to five area hospitals and eight outpatient imaging centers, performing procedures ranging from MRIs to x-rays of broken bones. The practice has one central business office that manages all the financial transactions and back-end business services for all 13 locations. The need for better, faster access to information during the billing process prompted the practice to take a closer look at electronic document management.

## Documents

RA needed to manage and store a large volume of documents. The office receives over 1100 radiology reports a day, some electronically and some in hard copy. From their outpatient imaging centers they also receive a large volume of signed consent forms. Additionally, the office needed to manage the constant flow of correspondence and Explanation of Benefit or EOB forms from numerous insurance companies.

## Work Process

After a procedure, a copy of the radiology report was sent to the business office to be used as a charge-ticket in the billing process. The reports were separated by hospital, date of service and filed alphabetically before being coded and billed. Correspondence and EOB documents were filed by document type in batches with batch numbers generated from the billing system.

The Accounts Receivable department employs 30 people, many of whom are responsible for a specific insurance company, to answer insurance correspondence, patient questions and help the department collect its receivables. The reps make notes of their actions in the billing system, referencing EOB or correspondence batch numbers. These notes were used to locate supporting documentation from the paper files if a question should arise at a later time.

To do their jobs, the reps were constantly requesting documents from the file room. When the file clerk was behind, each staff member would have to pull their own documents, spending 10-25 minutes looking for each request. The increased number of people in the file room increased the rate of misfiled documents. A couple of times a week

staff members would end up performing intensive time consuming document searches or have to re-request information from an insurance company.

"Our paper process slowed down the appeal process, which affected the rate our office collects payments from the insurance companies and the speed at which we can resolve patient issues," said Lou Blackwell, Accounts Receivable Manager for Radiology Associates of San Antonio.

The practice was only able to store one year's worth of documents on-site. Older documents were stored in three off-site storage units located 20 minutes from the office. Two or three times a month, a courier was sent to the off-site storage to pick up a box of needed information. The retrieved boxes usually sat in the A/R Manager's office until 15-20 of them piled up before they were returned to the storage unit.

## IT Situation

RA already had a city wide WAN in place and the hardware necessary to implement the solution.

## Solution Requirements

RA knew they needed to streamline their A/R workflow. They wanted to reduce document retrieval and storage time and give their staff a simpler way to access information. RA wanted to implement an imaging program that was user-friendly, intuitive, and could be managed and administered in-house.

## Solution

Office Communication Systems Inc., an Authorized DocuWare Partner, implemented RA's DocuWare system, which consisted of a System License and the

### The Task

- Reduce document retrieval and storage time
- Simplify access to information
- Implement a user-friendly solution

### Appointed Modules

- DocuWare
- COLD/READ
- RECOGNITION

### The Benefits

- Able to easily comply with HIPAA regulations
- Improved productivity by 25-30%, increasing cash flow
- Enhanced patient care and service because of the ability to answer questions and perform procedures from any location
- Efficient work processes positions the company for growth



COLD/READ and RECOGNITION modules, as well as 10 FULL FUNCTION licenses, 15 client licenses, two Canon DR-5020 and two Fujitsu scanners. Today, the Accounting office scans everything they send out and everything they receive, and each rep is responsible for scanning and indexing their own documents.

RA set up their DocuWare file cabinets by year and document type. Documents are indexed by batch number, in order to mimic RA's paper system and leave workflow processes unchanged. Consent forms are the only documents filed by something other than a batch number. To store these forms, RA utilizes DocuWare's optional OCR module to read the patient name from a fixed location on the form in order to automatically index the document by patient name. The practice brought in temporary help to scan some of their backlog of information.

## The Benefits in Detail

### User Benefits

The biggest benefit RA has seen since the implementation of DocuWare is the substantial decrease in document retrieval time. On an individual level, reduced retrieval time means each rep has more time to appeal more insurance claims, allowing the rep to better focus on their primary duty of improving the practice's A/R. By eliminating the hours spent hunting for misplaced informa-

tion or waiting for re-requested documents, job satisfaction and employee morale have also improved.

DocuWare's ease of use allowed RA to involve the reps in the scanning and indexing process. As a result, the scanning is always up to date and the employees are very motivated to index the documents with the correct information. Because the scanning task can so easily be divided among the reps, integrating the solution with existing business practices and personnel was easy.

### Department Benefits

Today with DocuWare, Lou Blackwell estimates the department's productivity has improved 25-30%, increasing cash flow and impacting the bottom line. Since implementing DocuWare, RA is able to immediately answer patient questions on the phone, no matter who spoke to the patient last, giving the practice more flexibility in handling patient calls.

DocuWare has also streamlined the department's workflow in regard to dealing with secondary insurance claims. EOB forms typically list more than one patient's information per page. With DocuWare, the reps can quickly bring up an EOB form and use the solution's editing functions to block out information that does not apply to the patient in consideration. The edited EOB form can then be easily submitted to a secondary insurance company without

permanently changing the original form, compromising another patient's privacy or making a rep spend a lot of time photocopying and whiting out sections of the form.

"I've personally seen that the benefits of the system are more than just the hard cost savings, the increase in efficiency ripples out and compounds the savings, lowering the total cost of the system," said Lou.

### Corporate Benefits

On a corporate level, the department's enhanced productivity allowed the practice to do more without hiring additional personnel, positioning the practice for growth. By storing documents electronically, the practice gained additional office space and decreased document storage costs.

DocuWare is crucial to the practice's management of consent forms and fulfills the privacy requirements established under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA law. When a satellite office calls requesting a copy of a consent form, it can be easily faxed or e-mailed directly from the desktop, allowing the practice to maintain central control over the forms and give patients the flexibility to have tests done at any office.

RA realized so many benefits from using DocuWare in their Accounting department that they are now working to use the solution in their filmless outpatient radiology centers. The combination of digital radiology equipment and DocuWare will make these offices almost completely paperless.

In conclusion, RA was able to receive a return on their investment in a year and a half and DocuWare is helping the practice achieve its goal of bringing innovative services to the patients under their care.

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Lou Blackwell,  
Accounts Receivable Manager,  
Radiology Associates of San Antonio

For more information  
please visit our website  
at [www.docuware.com](http://www.docuware.com)

