

Case Study

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Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan

A Records Management Investment that Pays Big Dividends

"We've done things with our records management process that few in this industry have ever done before... and it's working."

Director of Client Information and Records Compliance, Sutherland, Asbill & Brennan

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP is a law firm with global reach known for solving challenging business problems and resolving sophisticated legal issues for many of the world's largest companies. Founded in 1924, the firm handles matters throughout the United States and worldwide. With seven major practice areas — corporate, energy and environmental, financial services, intellectual property, litigation, real estate, and tax — Sutherland attorneys serve a diverse client base that ranges from small and medium-sized start-up businesses to a significant number of Fortune 100 companies.

CHALLENGE

With 400 plus attorneys and offices in Atlanta, Austin, Houston, New York, and Washington DC as well as available office-space in London and a partnership with another firm located in China, Sutherland Asbill, & Brennan LLP recognized the importance of developing an efficient, standardized records management system to house their vast archive of legal documentation. In 2006, Sutherland moved its Records Management function to report into its IT department. According to the Firm's Director of Client Information and Records Compliance, "When I took over the records function it was quickly apparent that our records handling had developed in an ad hoc manner. This was a source of frustration for many of our team members and in turn was costing the firm literally millions of unnecessary dollars. We needed to develop standardized records management policies and procedures across the firm's network of offices."

CHALLENGE

- Establish records management program
- Eliminate costly external vendor fees
- Reduce improper record handling, tracking, and storage
- Transform records operation

SOLUTION

- Robust records management program
- In-house warehouse
- Updated records management software system
- Standardized records management policies

RESULTS

- Safe records storage and retrieval
- Elimination of multiple storage fees
- Updated records management technologies
- Appropriately staffed warehouse facility

Case Study



SOLUTION

Sutherland turned to Ricoh to guide them through the revamping of their records management process. According to the customer, "When we began the process of overhauling our records management system, we knew we could trust the team at Ricoh. What we didn't realize was just how involved the process would be. Our team worked with us on every minute detail, offering services far beyond what most records management solutions providers offer."

The first challenge was to assess the real cost to the firm for their current records storage. When all the factors were considered, it was determined that the firm could realize savings of nearly \$10 million dollars over the course of 10 years by partnering with Ricoh to provide staffing for the records department and establish their own warehouse to store records.

"I think our biggest challenge in operating a warehouse was the cost involved in equipping this type of facility. This is not something typically budgeted for in most law firms." stated the Director. However, through conversations with Sutherland's team, Ricoh offered a solution involving cost sharing for the initial components necessary to get Sutherland's facility up and running to help defray the large, upfront costs.

As another component of the program, Sutherland chose to deploy Autonomy's IRM records management solution which can be used to manage both physical and electronic records. In addition, boxes at the warehouse can be tracked using a bar-code and are each assigned a shelf location. The team also assisted Sutherland in implementing a web-enabled camera platform known as "Elmos" that allows end-users to view documents remotely to select only what is actually needed.

RESULTS

The improved records management methodologies provided a long-term solution for safe records storage and retrieval, a disaster recovery hot-site, and updated enabling technologies. For Sutherland, this has equated to lowered costs, optimized efficiency and productivity and reduced risk. Information is quicker and easier to access throughout the firm and this transformed records operation has proven to be a strategic advantage for the firm's attorneys.

By leasing their own warehouse, Sutherland reduced expenses by eliminating the multiple storage fees associated with the constant retrieval, re-filing, and storage of offsite records. Ricoh has also provided onsite staff to support the day-to-day needs of the firm's record operations, which includes oversight of the third-party warehouse vendors. Ricoh professionals interface with Sutherland's IT staff, and record owners responsible for their respective files. They also oversee the retrieval of records and the release of files to ensure accuracy. In general, all of these efforts have helped to further boost efficiency and alleviate the administrative burden on Sutherland's internal staff.

According to the Director, "If I had to sum up our experience with Ricoh, I could do so with three simple words: Professional, Creative, Partners. Their assistance and guidance went above and beyond the call of duty. We've done things with our records management process that few in this industry have ever done before... and it's working."

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