

Laserfiche ECM Blogs

Tearing Down Walls

Written by Meghann Wooster



Six years ago, if you'd asked Ron Anderson how to add 150 employees to his medical billing company without relocating or acquiring new office space, he'd have looked at you and laughed. "I'd have told you it's impossible," says Anderson, director of business development at San Diego, California-based CHMB and a past president of the California chapter of the MGMA. "We'd have had employees sitting on each others' shoulders."

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Back then, CHMB was struggling to manage a surplus of paper documents so colossal that “we were using filing cabinets as walls and dividers between cubicles,” Anderson remembers. When this elicits chuckles from his listeners, he suddenly gets serious: “It’s funny until it costs you money. And, boy, that paper was costing us a lot.”

The Paper Pit

With over 700 physicians as clients, CHMB currently processes more than two million patient encounters annually—which translates into approximately 10 million documents a year. CHMB breaks the various types of documents down into four different “batches” for processing:

- **Charges.** Includes superbills, operative reports and patient information.
- **Payments.** Includes explanations of benefits (EOBs), checks and deposit slips.
- **Correspondence.** Includes requests for additional information from insurance companies/payors.
- **Discrepancies.** Includes items that require corrections or more complete information.

“Prior to implementing Laserfiche, we were using couriers to transport materials back and forth between our office and our clients’ practices, and paper storage was consuming valuable work space,” recounts Anderson.

But the cost of managing so much paper wasn't limited to courier, mail and storage costs; it also extended into employee time and productivity. "Staff had limited access to the paperwork they needed to process, so there were a lot of inefficiencies there," says Anderson. "And with so much paper coming in and out the door, we were constantly struggling to intelligently manage our workflow; there were just too many moving parts."

To stop the bleeding, CHMB started looking into content management solutions. According to Anderson, "There are less expensive options out there, but if your system becomes an obstacle to productivity, that's a problem. **We chose Laserfiche because we knew that it would make us more efficient. There was no question about that.**"

Serious Savings

With the help of Laserfiche reseller JPI Data Resource, CHMB implemented its content management solution in 2004. Since then, the billing company has been released from its dependence on paper. The volume of paper coming into the office has decreased, since approximately 50% of CHMB's clients scan and upload their documentation directly to the medical billing company via a secure FTP site. Although the other half of its clients still send paper, CHMB immediately scans the paperwork into Laserfiche and securely disposes of the paper originals after 30 days. "Our shredder stops by twice a week," says Anderson. "Paper is ugly, and we're no longer using file cabinets as cubicle walls."

Laserfiche has also decreased CHMB's couriering costs by 50%, but the efficiency gains have been even more impressive. "Laserfiche has enabled us to streamline, manage and audit our workflows," Anderson explains. "**Productivity has increased by 20%.**"

With Laserfiche, employees have desktop access to all of the documents they need, and data from the system also provides management with a comprehensive overview of the company's workflow, including:

- Where documents are in CHMB's workflow.
- Who is working on each document.
- The length of time it takes to process each document.

This type of tracking enables CHMB to measure the efficiency of its workflow and staff. It also enables the company to send reports to clients so that they can quickly identify whether they've neglected to send any necessary documentation. As a result, claims are paid faster, clients are happier and CHMB is more profitable.

Unexpected Benefit: Laserfiche Enables a Remote Workforce

According to Anderson, the biggest benefit of implementing Laserfiche is something that CHMB had never even imagined. **“When we first bought the system, we had no idea that it would allow us to add 150 employees without relocating or acquiring additional office space,”** he says.

Today, CHMB employs a corps of remote workers located around the country who connect to the company’s systems via a secure VPN. To ensure productivity, CHMB created standards and benchmarks for its remote workforce, and the results have been a tremendous success.

“The quality of our staff has increased since we began employing telecommuters,” says Anderson. “We’re able to attract the best people, without geographic limitations, and we find that people who value the flexibility to work from home work harder because they don’t want to lose that perk.”

Laserfiche has also enabled CHMB to offshore certain processes. “We now have a 24-hour workforce,” explains Anderson. “We’re getting work done around the clock.”

Thanks to its increased productivity and profitability, CHMB has been in acquisition mode of late. In September 2008, it acquired a San Diego-area billing company, and in October 2009 it bought a billing company in Orange County. “The first company we acquired was already using Laserfiche,” says Anderson, “so that merger was incredibly smooth. The second company used a different content management platform, so that transition has taken a little more work.”

Overall, “Laserfiche has been a huge differentiator for us,” Anderson concludes. **“We’re saving money, we’re more efficient and we’ve added 150 new employees without having to pay for additional office space.** Laserfiche is a great product that’s had a huge impact on CHMB and the high quality results we provide for our clients.”



Meghann Wooster is a senior writer at Laserfiche, helping information management and IT professionals optimize their use of enterprise content management (ECM) software. Follow her on twitter at @LFMeghann