



Document Management Case Study

Summary

- Crownlea Group implements document management system using File Stream software and Kodak scanner technology
- Company acquisitions by Crownlea drive installation of File Stream to improve efficiency across the group
- Over 500,000 documents now managed electronically

About the Client

With turnover in excess of £30 million, Crownlea Group employs 500 staff and is made up of various companies in the UK, Ireland and France specialising in servicing specific areas of the construction industry throughout Europe.

Through Crownlea Site Fixings, thousands of products used for site fixings¹ are sold, along with temporary fencing and steel hoarding systems, supplied by Crownlea's Blok N Mesh business. Founded in 1969, the company has grown organically and through acquisition purchasing Tiger Supplies Ltd (a provider of PPE², first aid, canteen, fire fighting equipment, signs and so on), Protecta Screen Ltd (a specialist manufacturer and distributor of temporary protection products for use on building sites) and Package-In Ltd (a supplier of tapes, boxes, bubble wraps and protective stretch film).

The Problem

Roulla Brownless, Crownlea's group IT manager, says, "Not only did each company acquired have its own paper-based filing system and process, but getting paperwork from the different businesses located all over the place was time consuming and difficult as each location held client paperwork. So, a big client ordering say from both our Birmingham and Aberdeen depots would have documentation in two places. The time was right to go electronic and install a group-wide EDM solution to cut down on the obvious administrative overhead managing all this."

The Solution

Crownlea Group installed Filestream's electronic document management (EDM) software, along with 40 simplex Kodak i30 workgroup scanners at its 16 locations throughout the country. In a deal worth £30,000, this has created a centralised storage system for all business paperwork generated by the various operating companies within the group, resulting in improved staff and organisational efficiency and faster response to customer queries.

Today, one person is employed in an auditing role to visit depots and ensure that File Stream is being properly populated, and older documentation scanned into the system with paperwork then shredded.

The 40 simplex Kodak i30 scanners are installed throughout the business at 16 depots including 3 main branch locations (London head office, Braintree and Liverpool) with one duplex Kodak i60 also deployed at head office. Roulla Brownless says, "Filestream recommended Kodak to us and the scanners have been easy to roll out. They've done exactly what we expected. You plug them in, turn them on, put paper through and that's it, they're simple to use and just work day after day."

¹ Crownlea is a major supplier of nails, bolts, expanding anchors, screws and plugs and so on and is a key stockist of Expamet Structural fixings, Rawlplug, Hilti, Paslode and many other recognised fixing brands.

² Personal protective equipment like safety helmets, gloves and high visibility clothing



Jonathan Tripp, Kodak's document imaging marketing manager, UK & EAMER, said, "With thousands and thousands of products to account for and supply, no wonder a feature-rich EDM solution like File Stream is making such an impact for Crownlea Group. We're delighted to play our part on the project. Clients want scanners to be easy to use, simple to manage from an IT perspective, with quality scans produced time after time. That's the experience Kodak brings after 80 years of working with business documents."

Jolyon Wilkinson, Filestream's sales director, says, "All client documentation generated by the various businesses is being scanned into the system including: delivery and collection notes, supplier invoices, contracts, along with internal documentation such as meeting minutes and proposals. Different "cabinets" in the system are created to store this based on depot location and documentation type, with access rights set up so that only the right people view things, with system security therefore maintained."

The Benefits of File Stream Document Management

Roulla Brownless says, "Searching for things is now easy. You can do this by client name, order or contract number and date ranges, and File Stream will pull up all associated documents. Without doubt, efficiency has increased and customer perceptions of us have improved, too. That's gold dust and a huge bonus for the company. If some-one phones in with an order query, we have all the relevant information at our finger tips, rather than in the old days, when there was a considerable amount of scrabbling about to get it."

Crownlea Group first installed File Stream in Q1 2005, the company and has since upgraded to version 4 of the software. Over 500,000 documents have been "back scanned" which has given staff a fuller picture of client accounts over time, plus allowed bulky paper documents to be shredded and office space released.

Roulla Brownless concludes, "As with any change in process and way of doing things, there was a little resistance across the business to deploy an EDM solution in the beginning. But the File Stream Document Management software and Kodak scanners have been surprisingly good, and really accepted by staff who now understand the benefits of using them. That's been amazing and is testament to the success of the project."

Moving forward, Crownlea Group is looking at installing File Stream Document Management in its French business, and integrating it with its UNIX-based Insitu 6 accounts, ordering and stock control system from MCS. Currently, staff take invoices produced in Insitu and scan them into Filestream, so integrating the two systems will clearly be more efficient and allow invoices to be sent to clients based on their specific requests, in other words via email, EDI³ or fax.

Why File Stream Document Management?

Crownlea Group selected Filestream because it was easy-to-use, Microsoft Windows-based and offered value for money. Running on a mid-range HP server located at head office in London, staff access the File Stream data base from around the country using a secure VPN connection and File Stream client software on their desktops. Some 40 employees are responsible for the scanning of documents into the system, with 100 in sales, accounts and management using File Stream Document Management day-to-day.

³ Electronic data interchange