

## **1. Time, space, lost business... Conventional filing may cost more than you think.**

Despite the "information age", most small to medium businesses still depend on archaic methods of document storage. Certainly, a large proportion of information is now stored electronically, but many documents still end up in conventional filing cabinets.

Neither is ideal. Especially when you're trying to compete in a faster, ever more demanding market. And of course, you can never predict when a document has been misfiled or completely lost, or anticipate disasters like flood, fire, malicious damage or power cuts. All of which, without adequate backup, could seriously affect your business.

### **How much is your valuable time worth?**

Hard copy filing is expensive in terms of time - statistics show that a single document can cost as much as £15 to file\*. When you consider how many documents get filed every day, the cost to your business soon mounts up.

Conventional filing is also expensive in terms of the valuable space it takes up. (A filing cabinet costs a company on average £500 a year in floor space rental costs alone\*.) And even when you store information electronically, documents are "not found on the system", corrupted or you simply can't remember where you filed them.

Statistics show that, on average, staff spend 10% of their time looking for information\*. That equates to nearly four hours a week - half a day's work wasted on hunting for information just to allow people to do their jobs properly. If you were to cut this down to just seconds rather than hours - across every area of your business, and for every member of staff - the savings could mount into tens of thousands of pounds per annum. And remember, these savings are then available to invest in your business to create even bigger profits.

### **How much are your customers worth?**

The pace of our working environment is getting faster as we endeavour to keep up with the increasing pressures of immediacy.

Customers want everything now, and they'll let you know the minute they're dissatisfied. Businesses simply can't afford *not* to keep up with these demands. And when it's customer service that separates the good from the bad, if your information retrieval isn't up to speed, you don't just risk losing existing customers, you risk missing out on new business too.

### **How much is your reputation worth?**

These days there seem to be more official rules and regulations than ever. You're not simply expected to comply with the ethos of these official bodies, but also the specifics of internal procedures, for example the handling of documentation going forward. And there's always the pressure of knowing that they could check up on you at any minute, demanding to see a client file from years back which may have been archived - or even misfiled. These coupled with regular audits and investigations compounds matters still further.

At best, the very thought of an official audit can result in days of additional administrative work. At worst, you run the risk of being fined, losing your accreditation and tarnishing

\* Source: [www.gartner.com](http://www.gartner.com)

your reputation as a 21<sup>st</sup> century organisation that takes its business and customers seriously. All of this is stressful, costly and time-consuming, and it's not what you're in business for.

### **How much is a simple solution worth?**

Electronic Document Management (EDM) is much simpler than it may at first sound. Essentially, it brings all forms of information together into one central electronic repository.

In other words, all your in-going and out-going correspondence, email, internal communications, transactions, official documentation, customer records, supplier information - in fact everything that would conventionally been stored in filing cabinets or your PC network - is stored in one instantly accessible and secure place.

Here are just some of the benefits that EDM brings to your business:

- The latest generation of EDM solutions are easier to use and more cost-effective than ever before, with full training available
- Fast information retrieval time maximises your working time
- Productivity is improved, giving you a competitive edge
- Storage costs are reduced and office floor space can be used more cost-efficiently
- Sharing of information is more effective and efficient
- Easy remote access for off-site working
- Easy compliance with both internal and external operating procedures

A good EDM system costs less than you think. Once the preserve of large corporations, prices have come down so much that the technology is now easily available to the small to medium business at an affordable price. So much so that some EDM systems cost less than £1 a day per user to run.

## **2. Document Management "automates the mundane" and speeds up customer service.**

The immediate benefit of an EDM system is the reduction in day-to-day administrative costs.

### **No more filing cabinets, paper or storage consumables**

Gone is the need for archive storage, and office space previously taken up by bulky filing cabinets can be put to more profitable use. You also save on paper and other storage consumables, all of which may seem small expenses but which - when added up over the course of a year - can be quite considerable.

### **No more "lost" files or risk of disaster**

File retrieval times are almost instantaneous; removing the wasted hours spent searching for documents. And there's no more risk of "lost" files, or different versions of the "same" file being in existence on several different computers.

And of course, a good EDM system comes with full backup, so all information can be instantaneously duplicated and filed securely off-site. A task that, in the old paper-based days, would be daunting to say the least.

### **No more poor customer service**

Of course the real bonus of EDM comes in terms of customer service. Customer information is instantly accessible so you can answer queries on the spot. Because you'll have an audit trail at your fingertips of past communications and transactions with that particular customer, there's no risk of error.

And because you won't have to ask the customer to wait while you go and find the relevant information, or call them back, you're immediately positioned as an efficient company that really takes its customers seriously.

It goes without saying that speed of service is critical if you're to keep ahead of the competition. So if you're working smarter by using EDM and your competitors aren't, you're already several steps ahead. And as everyone knows, retaining existing customers is far cheaper than finding new business. Worth the less than £1 a day it costs to run an EDM system? We believe you'll think so.

### **No more pressurised official audits**

EDM also keeps the industry bodies happy. Because, by law, many records have to be kept on file for years, if they're instantly accessible rather than moulding away in some basement filing cabinet, you immediately remove the pressure of official audits.

### **In a nutshell this is what EDM enables you to do:**

- Centralise your information pool
- Enable anyone with access to the system to retrieve a document in under two seconds, regardless of what format the original information was in

- Create a watertight audit trail on each document. You can instantly see where a document has gone, when it was edited, by whom and who received it. You can also instantly compare different versions of a document without having to wade through mountains of archives
- Save on valuable storage space - no more bulky, expensive filing cabinets
- Pull up information on any of your computers resulting in a powerful cross-reference tool
- Automate business processes such as invoices so that once they are in the system the information is instantly passed to the necessary people in the chain. No more walking up and down stairs and leaving files on people's desks
- Have a complete electronic back up of all your files, off site - for instant disaster recovery should the worst happen

### **Go straight to the information you need**

EDM isn't just about instantly calling up information. It also lets you text search the actual body of a document as well as the title. And here's a real bonus for when you're in a hurry... It actually highlights the search terms so you can go straight to the information you want.

Just think of the implications of this for your business efficiencies. Suddenly, at your fingertips, you can bring up all the records on a customer within seconds including all other correspondence with him, even references made to him internally, even emails. The power of this feature speaks for itself.

### **Put yourself back in control**

Put simply, EDM puts you back in control. And if you're not in control of your own systems and your own day-to-day running of the office where most of your work is done... If you're not in control of the information nerve centre that drives your business forward and upon which your success depends... then your reputation as a professional business is at risk. It's as serious and straightforward as that.

In these ultra competitive times, the business that demonstrates that it is in control of its communications and customer service is the business that will prosper.

Those that just "get by" will fall by the wayside. A bit of time-consuming administration used to be par-for-the-course in the days when everyone was doing paper-based filing. But as more and more organisations recognise the clear business benefits of EDM, to overlook this massive innovation in the world of business - especially when its costs so little to run - could be a disastrous move for any forward-thinking business.

### **3. EDM costs less than £1 a day to run.**

EDM used to be the preserve of large corporations. No more. These days, the technology is easily available to the mass market, especially the small to medium sized business, at affordable prices.

Installation and training are straightforward and payback is typically six to twelve months. In fact an EDM system can cost a small to medium business less than £1 a day per user to run.

Compare this with the huge cost implications of chasing up paper-based files, cabinet storage and actually filing the information in the first place. Also compare it with the cost implications of losing business because you're not perceived to be as efficient and "on the ball" as your competitors.

Compare it with the time you usually spend on official audits, not to mention the risk of fines because certain information may not tie up.

Then there's always the risk of a disaster. If you were to lose all your paper-based information through fire, flood or malicious damage... or if someone were to hack into your network or a virus play havoc with your data... what would be the implications to you in terms of lost business?

#### **Consider some of the other cost-saving benefits:**

- No more endless photocopying
- No more time wasted looking for the document you need
- No more flustered moments when you're running late for a client meeting and you've had no time to read up because you were looking for their file
- No more time spent chasing your staff for feedback on how each client is progressing
- No more tripping over ugly filing cabinets that take up valuable space
- No more worries of being able to prove that customers and official bodies have received certain documents - because everything is tracked and audited at every stage
- No more wasted time with frustrating call-backs, when (if you'd had a customer's details immediately to hand) you could have dealt with their query when they first called you

When you add it all up, for less than £1 a day you get a system that brings massive business benefits. It is not an overstatement to claim that EDM is an important to modern 21<sup>st</sup> century business as the advent of the computer all those years ago.

## 5. Do you really need EDM?

If you're weighing up the pros and cons of an EDM system, it's important to ask yourself a few questions.

### **How much can an EDM system improve my business throughput?**

You can expect to increase productivity by between 10-30% in as little as 45 days. You will save time, cut costs and remove the need for bulky paper filing units.

### **Is EDM relevant to every business?**

Yes, EDM is an indispensable tool for every business that needs fast access to up to date information and wants to remain competitive in a fast-moving business world. Five years from now, it's the kind of system that won't just be an optional "add on" but which will be an essential part of every forward-thinking business.

### **What would an EDM system mean for our staff on a day-to-day basis?**

An estimated four hours of every working week is lost retrieving and filing business information. With an EDM system, you can find any document you need in just seconds in a database of up to four million documents.

Every letter, spreadsheet, fax, email, drawing or other document can be recorded, tracked and accessed by designated users. So there will be no more endless photocopying, no more missing information and no more unnecessary storage costs.

### **Would I need to buy any extra software or equipment?**

No, EDM systems connect straight into your existing IT network so it runs seamlessly alongside your current systems without the need for expensive programming to create an interface. Everything is supplied, including a scanner that lets you instantly file hard copies as they come in. Electronic files are simply batch imported into the new repository.

### **Would a new system require full staff training?**

Invu's EDM systems include a 30-minute training session. However it's so straightforward that even the most technically shy member of staff will be able to master it almost immediately.

### **We've been managing fine with our traditional filing methods until now - do we really need a new system?**

But ask yourself this. How much time does it take you? How much space does it take up? Have you ever been faced with any "lost" files or human error as various versions of the "same" document get mixed up?

Have you ever had to call customers back because you can't lay your hands on that critical document or transaction? Have you ever been working remotely when you needed access to some key information and had to call into base and wait while someone else sourced it for you?

Do you have a system that files documents, letters, emails and transactions with each customer into one instantly accessible file? Have you ever felt the pressure of gathering together data for official audits?

An EDM system lets authorised users access all information securely from anywhere in the world, at any time of the day or night. This is invaluable if you want to lay your hands on a vital piece of legislation, a supplier brochure or important customer records, but don't want to waste valuable time travelling to base to do it.

### **Customisable**

Because not all businesses are the same, a good EDM system can be tailored to suit the individual organisation. You'll find out more about which EDM system is right for you on the following pages.

### **What if we run into difficulties, is there any level of support?**

Invu provides a wealth of free support information on our website. We also have an expert and highly experienced network of partners who are on hand to advise on any problems over the phone, and are trained to provide all the practical help you need on a local basis. And of course, as mentioned above, you enjoy full staff training.

Put simply, deciding if you need an EDM system is similar to the time when companies were deciding if they needed to install computers. More recently, the debate was on whether email or the Internet was essential. Recently it's been solutions like Broadband. And now it's time for your business to consider the advantages of EDM, which will inevitably become as critical to your business efficiency as email communications.

Those that jump on board now stand to reap huge rewards in terms of retained and gained business, and an enhanced reputation. And be sure that if you don't have an EDM system in the very near future, your competitors certainly will.

## 6. Choosing the right system for your needs.

Whatever your unique document management requirements, we can provide a bespoke solution from a wide range of options. You need to consider such issues as:

- Do you have stand-alone computers, or is your office environment networked?
- Would your business benefit from workflow management?
- Do you have remote workers that need Internet or Intranet portal access to the system?
- Do you want control over user access privileges, so you control who can view or edit particular documents?
- What kind of images do you need to import into the system?
- Which other teams will require access to your documents?
- What other applications (eg Windows) hold data and would benefit from integration into the system?

## Conclusion

I trust you've found this report interesting and picked up some useful information along the way.

In summary, conventional filing of information is expensive, not just in terms of the time it takes to file and retrieve a document, but in terms of the valuable floor space it takes up.

There are also cost implications when it comes to keeping up to speed with official bodies and customer demands, not to mention the cost in terms of disaster recovery should fire, flood or malicious damage affect your data.

With more and more businesses embracing the bottom line benefits of remote working, access to mission critical data, on the move, is something that every small to medium sized business can now enjoy. And EDM isn't expensive. In fact it can cost as little as £1 a day per user to run - that's less than the cost of four first class stamps.

EDM isn't one of those technological "breakthroughs" that impede a job rather than assist it. Far from it. Here we have a solution that's installed in the fastest amount of time, with the minimum amount of disruption to your business.

EDM is also easy to use and even easier to master. It runs seamlessly alongside your existing systems, with no complicated interface required. And literally anything can be stored this way - electronic data, your entire filing cabinet contents, even audio, DVD and videotapes in some cases.

As our enthusiastic customers will tell you, EDM is an investment that - like your computer network, email and Internet usage - isn't an optional add-on anymore, it's an essential part of 21<sup>st</sup> century business for organisations of all sizes. Once you've seen the bottom line benefits for yourself, you will wonder how you ever did without it.