



Case Study: Township of Springwater

Document management system for government records saves time and improves relations with residents



About our customer

Situated between the City of Barrie and the Town of Wasaga Beach, and just 100 kilometers north of Toronto, the Township of Springwater provides its residents with access to a wide range of cultural and urban events in Ontario. Its enviable location, combined with its picturesque countryside and affordable lifestyle, earned Springwater a top 100 ranking on the MoneySense best places to live in Canada list. The staff at the Township of Springwater work hard to maintain its positive reputation and the exceptional quality of life of its 22,700 residents.

Challenge

- Physical records created silos and interfered with collaboration between departments
- Increased need for file storage space
- Time wasted locating and accessing physical records
- Delayed record delivery to residents and FOI requests harming reputation for transparency

A healthy municipality depends on keeping accurate, detailed records. And while the Township of Springwater was keeping plenty of records, they had a serious problem storing and accessing them. This document management system case study shares what happened when the Township of Springwater turned to Ricoh for a solution.

“Everything was very compartmentalized,” explained Karen Way, Deputy Clerk of the Township of Springwater. “I called it our siloes. Each department had its own network drive and filing system, and no other department had easy access to it.”

“Ricoh has been a great partner, and I would recommend them to any municipality looking to digitize their records. Ricoh was there every step of the way, and they’re never afraid to take on a challenge. We asked a lot of them, and they delivered the product above and beyond our expectations.”

— Karen Way, Deputy Clerk for the Township of Springwater

Active records were physically stored in a room above the municipal offices, taking up five filing shelves and growing at an alarming rate. Staff was wasting time searching for files both on- and off-site, and costs were rising. The reliance on physical records and lack of department integration also made it difficult for township staff to work collaboratively.

“There was a lot of duplication,” says Way. “You couldn’t easily find anything that someone else had been working on, and you never knew when you had the final record or not. It was difficult to access final reports after the fact.”

Physical records would occasionally go missing or become delayed when staff members were on vacation, sometimes sitting on a desk for weeks at a time. And because sifting through paper files was a time-consuming task, any requests for records in storage took a long time to fulfill. While the township continued to meet legislative deadlines in responding to Freedom of Information Requests or resident inquiries, it wanted to increase turnaround time to improve its reputation for openness and transparency.

Solution

- **Ricoh’s document management system for government completely digitized the township’s records**
- **All historical and current documents were scanned and uploaded to a single digital location accessible to all departments**

“We chose Ricoh because they had the experience with the software we were looking to implement, they had the staff support we needed, and they took the time to understand our needs,” explained Way.

Leveraging Laserfiche technology, Ricoh digitized the township’s entire document management system for government records. Over the course of the implementation, Ricoh scanned and uploaded every historical and current document the township had, and created a single unified record management system all departments could access.

“Ricoh has been a great partner, and I would recommend them to any municipality looking to digitize their records,” said Way. “Ricoh was there every step of the way, and they were never afraid to take on a challenge. We asked a lot of them, and they delivered the product above and beyond our expectations.”

Results

- **Reduced need for physical file storage space**
- **Improved collaboration, reduced duplication, and eliminated bottlenecks among staff**
- **New workflows, forms, and search functionality save staff time**
- **Faster document delivery has improved resident satisfaction and perception of transparency**

Since implementing Ricoh’s document management system, the Township of Springwater has seen a number of improvements for its staff as well as the residents they serve.

With all historical records now digitized, the physical space required to store active documents has been cut nearly in half, and two of the five storage shelves have been removed.

Since all departments can now access a single, digital document, reports are no longer susceptible to duplication errors. This saves staff time from having to check and re-check reports before they go to council and has eliminated bottlenecks when staff are away for a significant period.

“We can now seamlessly and efficiently circulate reports among departments and have that one final version without multiple copies,” said Way.

The digital records management system has also created new workflows that save staff time. Forms processing for Freedom of Information Requests, for instance, is now available online and search results are available instantly to staff. This has improved relations with residents and boosted the township’s reputation for transparency, as staff can quickly and easily deliver any document requested, right on the spot.

Looking to the future, Way sees several possible new avenues for the Township of Springwater to manage their documents even more efficiently using Ricoh’s solution: “We’re looking at implementing an accounts payable process so we can circulate invoices digitally, and we’re also looking at doing a lot of our licensing and permits through our forms process.”

“The document management system has improved residents’ satisfaction. When we get phone calls now, we don’t have to call them back because we have to run and pull a file. Instantly, while the person is explaining what their situation is, you’re able to pull that file and respond immediately.”

— Karen Way, Deputy Clerk for the Township of Springwater



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