

Case Study

distributor

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The Macomb Group

Making information work for a growing wholesale distributor

"Documents are now immediately available across all of our 18 locations, instead of managing everything manually out of our Sterling Heights corporate headquarters—and for essentially the same amount of money we were spending on leased MFPs before."

Jeff Fouchia, CIO,
The Macomb Group

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Founded in 1977, The Macomb Group is a leading wholesale distributor of pipe, valves, and fittings (PVF) with 18 locations in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Tennessee. Ranked in the "Top Ten" nationally as a distributor of industrial PVF, the company services a diverse mix of end markets, including automotive (OEM's and suppliers), food & beverage, general manufacturing, hospitals, schools & universities, pharmaceuticals, utilities, power plants, steel, pulp & paper, refineries, general industry, gas distribution, and the shale/fracking industry.

Headquartered in Sterling Heights, Michigan, The Macomb Group has grown by following the mission of its founders—to always seek alternative means or innovative products that make it possible for The Macomb Group customers to save money, conserve energy and become more efficient in their own businesses.

CHALLENGE

Over its 38-year history and resulting diverse mix of end markets, the company developed a highly paper-intensive workflow, creating approximately four million documents each year related to the products it sells and the services it receives from numerous vendors. Banks and banks of filing cabinets at the company's headquarters stored the vast number of documents for the most current customer orders, fabricated products and related test reports. Every six months, the documents would be moved to a second set of filing cabinets to make room for new documents and, after a year, they were sent to a warehouse for long-term storage as the rotation continued.



CHALLENGE

- Replace a cumbersome, paper-based document filing workflow with an electronic document management system

SOLUTION

- New MFPs and integrated document management solution that is compatible with the company's ERP software, enhancing information mobility

RESULTS

- Elimination of costly record storage, instant availability of digitized documents throughout the organization and data backup

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When its lease contract for competitive multifunction products (MFPs) was near expiration, The Macomb Group's CIO, Jeff Fouchia, decided it was time to follow the path the company had always outlined for its customers and find an alternative to its current document management solution.

"The fact is, we get invoices every day," said Fouchia. "In the past, when we paid those invoices, we would file a copy of the check along with the invoice in a filing cabinet and store it away. Not anymore. Now, we can scan those invoices and attach an electronic image of the check directly from our ERP. Then, if anyone needs to look up a purchase order, they can start in our ERP software right from their desk and look up the paperwork stored in the document management system with a couple of clicks. It has reduced so many steps."

"One of my goals was to find a way to get out of the business of storing paper," said Fouchia. "I made some phone calls and two of my trusted business partners suggested I contact Ricoh, which I did in addition to a few other vendors." After carefully evaluating their information needs and the MFPs and document management solutions of each company, The Macomb Group chose Ricoh. The Macomb Group based its final decision on the fact that Ricoh offered the right level of functionality and intuitive simplicity when it came to information workflow as well as the ability to integrate seamlessly with The Macomb Group's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software, all at a competitive price.

SOLUTION

The answer for The Macomb Group included approximately 40 Ricoh MFPs distributed throughout the company's locations as well as a standalone scanner in the corporate headquarters, making it possible for the company to easily digitize its myriad of documents and onboard them to the document management system.

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The document management solution Ricoh deployed is helping The Macomb Group meet regulatory compliance standards as well. When the company receives an order to manufacture a pipe or fitting to certain specifications required for use in industry, a fabrication log is used during the manufacturing process to document the specifications and steps in the manufacturing process. Additionally, a mill test report is generated to confirm and document that the pipe or fitting meets the required specifications. The best news is they now have the ability to capture these critical documents associated with the sales order in the system.

“Paper-based processes simply come with a risk that a critical document like a mill test report can get misplaced,” Fouchia explained. “That risk has been virtually eliminated with our new system. If there is ever a question about the specifications for a fabricated product, the information needed to provide an answer is easily accessible. We also have the additional benefit of digitally enhancing and cleaning the fabrication logs, which can get soiled in the factory. It’s really amazing.”

RESULTS

Fouchia is pleased to have an affordable document management system in place that integrates with The Macomb Group’s ERP system and greatly enhances information mobility within the organization. “Documents are now immediately available across all of our 18 locations, instead of managing everything manually out of our Sterling Heights corporate headquarters—and for essentially the same amount of money we were spending on leased MFPs before.”

Fouchia also appreciates that the system provides backup for the organization’s data. “Historically, our documents were stored in several locations, putting us at risk of losing valuable information due to fire or some other incident. That is less of a worry now.”

The Macomb Group is so pleased with the digital document management system Ricoh implemented that it intends to use the same system to electronically store the documents of a pipe insulation contracting company it recently acquired. “They have a lot of large drawings and blueprints that we can scan into the system rather than storing them physically. We intend to expand our use to other ancillary businesses as well. The workflow efficiencies we have been able to achieve with Ricoh are incredible. We are very happy.”

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