

Combine Imaging, Workflow To Win Sales

This integrator is winning sales by partnering with its distributor to provide an imaging and workflow solution for commercial real estate firms.

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Richard Seery, president of Seery Systems Group, Inc., has serviced The Durst Organization in Manhattan for close to a decade. Seery Systems Group specializes in document imaging solutions with a focus on banking, financial, and real estate entities. The Durst Organization is a family-owned real estate company that owns, builds, and manages commercial buildings in the Manhattan area. Behind the scenes lies the EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender5 (AX5) solution Seery installed in 1997 to index and archive Durst's business documents. Since that time, Seery has consistently enhanced the functionality of Durst's imaging system, including the addition of front end processing. "Once we were in the door at The Durst Organization and proved our value, our contacts at Durst proactively approached us with ideas on automating processes," states Seery.

Recently, The Durst Organization contacted Seery for assistance in analyzing the business flow in Durst's accounts payable process. The Durst headquarters processes approximately 300 invoices weekly, which previously caused several inefficiencies. Formerly, each invoice was reviewed by a clerk at the headquarters and distributed to branch buildings via courier for approval. Durst wanted to address three problems in this manual process. First, relying on a courier to deliver invoices to the proper buildings in a timely manner lacked the control Durst wanted. Second, the company wanted to reduce the resulting 30-day pay cycle. Finally, many vendors submit invoices every 10 days if payment is not received, resulting in duplicate invoices in the accounts payable process simultaneously.

Combine Document Scanning With Customized Workflow Solution

Seery partnered with distributor Mackin Imaging Systems to implement a solution combining invoice scanning and intelligent workflows. Seery focused on the scanning process, while Mackin constructed the workflow system and provided an interface to Durst's AS/400 environment, which handles all data processing. Upon initial review, Durst labels each invoice with a unique bar code and scans it via a centralized scanning process using OCR for AnyDoc and a Canon 3060 scanner, and marks a placeholder in the workflow package to avoid duplicates. An accounts payable clerk accesses the AS/400 environment to code each invoice into the general ledger, then the workflow system routes each invoice to the appropriate building secretary.

Information is added to invoices via a distributed scanning process, using a Canon 2080 scanner at each branch building, and invoices are routed to property managers. The controller, chief operation officer, vice president, and president approve the invoice if deemed necessary by the built-in complex approval and routing process. The AS/400 system generates the check, and the workflow system appends a routing page to the end of each invoice indicating the date and time of each approval, payment date, and comments added throughout the process.

Workflow Solution Leads To Additional Real Estate Customers

Durst's entire account billing process was reduced to approximately 15 to 20 days, and up-to-date information is available throughout the process. "This solution met all three of Durst's core needs," says Brian Harkness, director of information technology at Mackin Imaging Systems. "The streamlined distribution, elimination of duplicate invoices, and reduction of time for the accounts payable process enabled Durst to profit from vendor discounts by paying earlier. In addition, Durst reduced operating expenses, including courier services, paper, and toner."

Since this implementation, Seery Systems Group and Mackin Imaging Systems sold this solution to three other real estate companies. In addition, Seery and Mackin have been called upon to automate Durst's tenant leasing process using workflows. In the second quarter of 2006, Seery and Mackin will work to eliminate Durst's manual general ledger coding process by using the OCR for AnyDoc system to capture invoice information upon scanning. The Durst Organization also has plans to incorporate workflows into its human resources processes, including application filtering, transfers and terminations, and compliance with laws.