

Case Study

education

Tillamook Bay Community College

Ricoh teaches Pacific Northwest community college how to affordably digitize documents and automate business processes

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– Ray Hoyt
Title III Project Director
Tillamook Bay
Community College
Tillamook, Oregon



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Unless you're a resident of Oregon, an avid fisherman or a tourist in the Pacific Northwest, you might not have heard of Tillamook Bay Community College. Nestled in a very rural, coastal and remote area of picturesque Oregon, it's the smallest community college in the state, with fewer than 500 students, six and a half annually contracted faculty and approximately 40 adjunct faculty.

Yet, their mission is big and their profile is growing. For accreditation purposes TBCC was part of Portland Community College, but in 2013 Tillamook Bay Community College branched out on their own and became accredited. Now in charge of their own destiny, the college recently broke ground on the Rural Innovation Center, and offers associates degrees, training and certifications in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs ranging from agriculture to criminal justice to the arts to transfer opportunities.

Still, funds are limited for smaller institutions like Tillamook Bay Community College. And like many of their higher education counterparts across the state and nation, there are decades of unarchived documents cluttering office space, filing cabinets and storage areas.

With two of their key administrators set to retire soon—the college president and Title III project director armed with a U.S. Department of Education Title III grant — the time was right to overhaul outdated processes and create an enduring legacy. Not just to convert all of the college's paper documents to electronic form, but to automate their business processes to better manage the flow of information, adapt to various work style preferences and establish a solid technology infrastructure for the future.

CHALLENGE

- Digitize 35 years of paper records
- Automate curriculum development process
- Innovate with limited funds
- Underutilized DocuWare® software platform

SOLUTION

- Expansion to DocuWare EDM
- Leverage DocuWare for widespread business process automation
- Staggered, customized training
- Four Ricoh MFPs

RESULTS

- From zero to nearly 50,000 digital records
- 3-year scanning project completed in six months
- Exceeded target by more than 332 percent
- 65-week time savings in payroll alone

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CHALLENGE

As five-year plans go, Tillamook Bay's was ambitious. They wanted to eventually migrate most of their paper records to an electronic form. It would be no simple task, as the college had amassed 35 years' worth of paper documents throughout various departments, from student services and financial aid to the college foundation and human resources.

"Our president had become the college's archivist because the last three presidents threw nothing away," said Ray Hoyt, Title III Project Director at Tillamook Bay Community College. "We had bazillions of documents in our building."

At the same time, the college's chief academic services officer was exploring options to procure software to automate writing, revising, approving and publishing class curricula—as well as to align curricula learning outcomes with assessments. The costs for curriculum development software ranged from \$40,000 to \$100,000, plus annual fees. There were some funds available for this since TBCC secured in 2013 a Title III Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, entitled Improving Persistence and Completion, Capacity and Resource Development through Technology and Resource Development. Along with curriculum development tools, the college wanted to transform their electronic document management (EDM) with something fairly simple and intuitive to scan paper documents as well as digitally store and retrieve them.

All of this was bubbling to the surface right when a new Ricoh representative for Oregon called on TBCC to introduce herself and learn about the college's challenges. In one meeting, she discovered the college's plans to digitize paper documents and automate curriculum development.

She also learned the college already had DocuWare® software, but it wasn't being used beyond the Student Services department. DocuWare software automates business processes and workflows by electronically managing and sharing documents regardless of their format or source. With DocuWare, documents are readily available—where and when they are needed—and files can be located with one quick search.

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Suddenly, an idea emerged. An expansion of the college's DocuWare platform could be the right tool to digitize all of their paper records and automating business processes for curriculum development and beyond.

SOLUTION

Rather than buying pricey software piecemeal, we recommended that Tillamook Bay leverage their current DocuWare platform and expand the system with DocuWare EDM. Intrigued, the college agreed to work with us to explore the possibility.

We mapped out the college's current processes and compared them to the capabilities of DocuWare EDM. They held Q & A sessions with five of the college's departments that could benefit from automated processes and provided demonstrations on how DocuWare EDM could accomplish their goals.

"We developed a trust-oriented relationship with Ricoh through the discovery process," said Hoyt. "They helped us figure out what would work best as a long-term solution—not just a quick fix."

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In the end, we successfully demonstrated that one software platform could meet the vast majority of the college's needs—instead of separate costly pieces of software they had considered. DocuWare EDM could handle 95 percent of the scanning, storing and retrieval of digitized documents. It could also satisfy about 80 percent of the college's need for business process automation throughout human resources, business services, student services, instructional services and the college foundation.

"With the other software packages we were considering, we were talking real money," said Hoyt. "Ricoh knew going with DocuWare would be very reasonable for us."

Midway through the discovery process, we learned that the college's lease on their four multifunction printers (MFPs) was also about to expire. Having come to trust our technology and expertise, the college switched to Ricoh MFPs so they would have just one trusted vendor for EDM and printing hardware.

"We're a small college that's cautious about our financial decisions," said Hoyt. "Ricoh was the best deal in terms of products and service."

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Once we on-boarded the DocuWare EDM expansion, the focus then turned to training. President Connie Green wanted to make sure the technology worked—and staff would use it. They even asked for a customized training approach to promote staff adoption.

"We wanted to make sure we had behavioral change and the technology would be used on an ongoing basis," said Green. "Ricoh adapted and customized their training to fit our needs, not the needs of their corporation."

To do so, we implemented a staggered training approach. One department was targeted for training every two weeks, beginning with two hours of Skype training on Monday followed by staff entering documents into the system the rest of the week. The college brought in a paid, part-time student to rotate between the departments, enter documents and troubleshoot issues. In the end, the staff became enthusiasts of the new DocuWare EDM solution.

"We knocked the socks off training and the DocuWare technology continues to be used today because work style change happened," said Hoyt.

RESULTS

Tillamook Bay couldn't be more pleased with both Ricoh and the DocuWare EDM solution. Digitizing all of the college's paper documents was expected to take three years, but was far ahead of schedule—in just six months.

In addition to backfile conversion of old paper records, college staff are also using the DocuWare technology for day-forward scanning of new paper documents. Grant funds were used to pay for the DocuWare expansion because the project met the criteria for business process improvement, increased efficiency and continuous process improvement. And plans are in the works to expand DocuWare even further to implement all of the workflow automation the college needs.

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“We went from having zero digitized documents to 49,856 digital records from 2015 to 2016 and we exceeded our target by 332.4 percent,” said Hoyt.

Big and small wins

Since automating their business processes, the college has logged improvements both big and small. What used to take a week to track down a paper document from years past can now be retrieved in electronic form in minutes, if not seconds. TBCC is committed to continuous process improvement. For example, the college’s payroll department has saved 65 weeks of college-wide manpower time annually by automating business processes. Currently, there are 22 other projects like this on campus, which demonstrate the college’s commitment to continuous process improvement.

“There have been so many improvements from simply organizing our offices better to being able to find things much more quickly and effectively and saving substantial amounts of time,” said Hoyt.

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Mission accomplished

In higher education, the true mission is to serve students, troubleshoot their problems and help them achieve their goals. By decreasing process time, the college’s faculty and staff now are able to devote more energy to their students.

“Our entire campus is mobilized around the notion that students are our customers and we need to do things of value for them,” said Hoyt. “Ricoh and DocuWare have helped us free up time to serve our students better.”



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