

Integrated Solutions

DIGITAL MAILROOM STREAMLINES PAYMENT PROCESSING

This service bureau cut payment processing labor 25% with the implementation of a digital mailroom solution.

by Sarah Howland

Every business would like its document imaging process to be as efficient as possible. But, if document imaging is the core of your business, efficiency of this process becomes a necessity. Affiliated Computer Services (ACS) is a service bureau that provides payment processing services. Community & Youth Services (CYS) is a division of ACS that processes \$14 billion of government child support payments each year in 15 states.

CYS processes more than 12 million child support payments for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) annually, equaling approximately \$2 billion. CYS is hired by ODJFS for a six year and seven month contract period. At the end of each contract, CYS must re compete for the job. According to federal standards, all payments must be processed and disbursed to the support recipient within 48 hours of receiving them, making a high-speed process crucial to winning the contract.

Of the child support payments, 80% come from employers (child support is typically withheld from wages), 10% are personal payments, and 10% are interagency payments (from another state), which means that payments come with different types of remittance documents. In addition to the remittance documents, CYS often receives various other correspondence such as a note from an employer saying an employee no longer works there. Each document, along with the child support check, needs to be captured, recognized, and the data uploaded into the customer's mainframe the same day it's received.

At the beginning of CYS' current contract with ODJFS, 30 employees were completing separate functions for opening mail, document sorting, scanning, and QA (quality assurance). Two different types of scanners were being used, each requiring a different orientation of the documents, which increased the need for QA. With the wide range of various documents that CYS received with payments, the scanners oftentimes were mistaking checks for documents. "If you have 300,000 pieces of paper, and somewhere in there is a lost check you must find and process," says John Polk, VP and COO of CYS, "all processing stops until you find the check, wasting valuable time." Further time is spent rescanning the checks once they are found.

OPTIMIZE WORKFLOW WITH MAIL AUTOMATION

In spring 2007, CYS decided to implement a more efficient solution. The goal was to decrease labor while continuing to process documents at the same speed and without increasing its error rate. Some of the other 15 CYS locations had installed AS3690i digital mailroom units from OPEX. The AS3690i is a high-speed color scanner with a drop feeder that is integrated into an OPEX rapid extraction desk, a

one-person desk that combines mail extraction and image capture. Mail is placed on the extraction desk where it is opened and the extracted documents are dropped onto a conveyor. The employee watches a screen as the documents on the conveyor are scanned and ensures that they are captured and identified correctly. An audit trail is then applied to the documents, and they are sorted into output bins. Whereas CYS employees were previously completing separate functions for opening mail, sorting, and scanning, the AS3690i enables employees to open, capture, process, and sort documents and output data from one piece of equipment.

Eight AS3690i units were delivered and set up along-



The OPEX AS3690i allows employees at the service bureau to open, capture, process, and sort documents from one piece of equipment.

side the scanning equipment CYS was currently using. After an OPEX orientation, which gave an overview of the AS3690i and how to use it, the system was phased in. For a period of six weeks, employees were able to continue using the equipment they had been, but were required to use the AS3690i for a portion of their work. CYS brought in an instructor who had been involved in the implementation of the AS3690i in other locations to work with the employees and help them learn to use the stations. "We wanted to give the employees ample time to learn the AS3690i because it is a different eye-hand movement than they were used to," says Polk. "The AS3690i workstation takes more thought to use. With the previous equipment, an employee could carelessly send documents through and hope someone downstream would catch any errors. With this equipment, the employee is accountable from the beginning because the documents have to be put in correctly."

Since implementing the digital mailroom solution, CYS is processing the child support payments at the same speed with fewer errors, while decreasing mail/scan labor by 25%. The AS3690i digital mailroom solution has now been implemented at 14 of 15 CYS locations, each of which is experiencing similar results. □

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