

KDOT Shifts Into High Gear

Electronic forms, workflow, document management and electronic signatures drive results



The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) oversees the state's network of roads and bridges. The Department has more than 3,000 employees dedicated to road and bridge maintenance, transportation planning, project scoping, design, and contract compliance inspection of labour and materials.

THE PROBLEM

KDOT had more than 2,000 different types of documents, including 700 forms, which created more than two million individual documents for the Department each year. Many of these documents drove internal processes, such as user ID request forms, performance review and personnel action forms, time sheets, employee benefit forms, and purchase and travel requisitions, all of which required multiple signatures for approval.

These documents were filed at one of the Department's 144 offices, or at one of the several off-site storage facilities spread across the state. With so many locations for storage, it was not only complicated to locate and access documents, but also the costs for physical storage were increasing each year as the volume of documents grew. This was becoming unnecessarily costly, as up to 60 percent of KDOT's documents were redundant. Electronic documents were converted to paper, routed for signatures, and then converted

to microfilm for physical storage. Both the microfilm and the paper documents were often archived.

The Department also recognized the inefficiencies associated with routing hard-copy documents for signature. To capture approvals from employees in various area and sub-area offices, the agency had to distribute the paperwork by fax or inter-office mail. Physically circulating paper documents such as user ID request forms - which required as many as seven signatures - took up to several days. During this time, new employees would be unable to access the systems needed to perform their jobs, resulting in lost productivity.

THE CHALLENGES

KDOT had a goal of enhancing services and improving response time for requests that required staff to route, review, and approve product information.

Also, the Department was focused on streamlining employee collaboration and improving internal operations. By adding automated workflows and bringing forms online, KDOT was hoping to improve the efficiency of manual processes, allowing staff to devote more time to higher value-added activities.

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THE SOLUTION

Several years ago, KDOT conducted a study that showed that the Department could realize significant cost savings by converting forms and data to PDF files, routing them electronically, and storing them in a document management system. As a result, the Department invested in a combination of products to automate their processes, including electronic forms, workflow, document management, and electronic approvals.

The Department selected and deployed Adobe's Form Client and Workflow Server to bring forms online and manage their routing. After reviewing their procedures and needs, the Department also felt that they needed a solution that would deliver visual electronic signatures. This led to the integration of Silanis' ApproveIt Desktop product. ApproveIt Desktop is a client-based program that lets users create a secure electronic signature file that is encrypted and stored on their hard drive. When users were ready to sign a document, they simply clicked on the sign icon within the familiar office application, and entered their password that applied a secure signature to the document or form.

Once the documents were signed, they were then stored in the Department's FileNet

Document Management System. This flow of online forms, electronic workflow and approvals, and electronic document storage, brought the entire process online, and made it 100 percent electronic.

THE RESULTS

The deployment of this integrated system to create end-to-end electronic document creation and management resulted in the Department implementing electronic signatures on many key forms. Part of the automation process has involved the department reviewing forms and procedures to reduce bureaucracy. In some cases, the number of approvals per form was reduced, and in others, entire forms were eliminated from the approval process.

The Department also converted 31 manual paper-based workflows into fully electronic processes. Employees can now use the agency's intranet to complete leadership evaluations, procurement requests and other business forms online. Once completed, forms are automatically routed – based on XML-driven rules – to managers for review and electronic sign-off.

As a whole, these changes have streamlined employee collaboration and improved internal operations. Many administrative tasks are now fully automated, resulting in

significant productivity and cost savings.

Switching to electronic forms enabled the department to eliminate the wasted time and data errors that occurred as employees keyed data from paper forms into back-end systems. This enables more efficient processes while producing more reliable and accurate data.

Seamless integration of KDOT's electronic forms and workflow system with ApproveIt, helps to drive additional value from other technology investments, such as electronic forms, and workflow, as processes remain 100% electronic. Capturing approvals on forms now takes minutes instead of hours.

Turnaround times on processes have reduced dramatically. For example, a form used to issue permits for highway accesses that used to take two months now takes about three weeks. The KDOT has seen consistent improvements in the reduction of turnaround time by about 60 percent. ↻

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