



Case Study Facts:

CLIENT: United Natural Foods, Inc.

DIGITECH SYSTEMS RESELLER: DataBank IMX

PROBLEM: Paper-based accounting processes were challenged by increasing amounts of invoices and continued document growth

SOLUTION: PaperFlow™ and PaperVision Enterprise

RECOGNIZED BENEFIT: Increased productivity for accounting processes, created more office space for future growth and improved employee morale

United Natural Foods Easily Manages 270,000+ Documents with PaperVision® Enterprise

The increasing number of health-conscious consumers equals big business for United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI), but it also means Controller, Ernie Bullard, has to ensure efficient document processing and keep the accounting department on top of a growing number of invoices. When Bullard realized that increased volumes of paper documents could hinder the department from properly managing company growth, he knew they needed an Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system that would save time and help them work smarter.

Since DataBank IMX, a Digitech Systems reseller, implemented PaperFlow and PaperVision Enterprise, UNFI can now retrieve documents in seconds, effectively manage growing quantities of documents with the same number of employees and ease financial auditing burdens.

The Situation

UNFI (www.unfi.com) is the largest publicly traded wholesale distributor for the natural foods industry. It supplies more than 17,000 retailers and supermarkets with more than 60,000 natural products including nutritional supplements, personal care items and organic produce.

Over the past 10 years, UNFI has averaged 16% growth per year. While the success was welcomed, the expanding workload was overwhelming for the accounting department in UNFI's western region offices in Rocklin, CA. Every month, four full-time employees and one part-time employee handle approximately 18,000 accounts payable invoices and 6,000 accounts receivable documents. To add to the challenge, the Internal Revenue Service requires UNFI to keep those records for seven years.

Prior to DataBank's implementation of PaperFlow and PaperVision Enterprise, documents from the past two years were kept in a file room filled with 150 filing cabinets. Older records were stored in a 2,000 square-foot storage space, where pallets of documents were stacked to the ceiling. With more and more invoices, Bullard could see their need for storage space was escalating out of control.

Under the paper-based system, employees spent 15 minutes retrieving each billing-related document and lost nearly 15 hours of productivity each week. When invoices were misplaced,

"Our industry was growing so fast that our paper-based processes weren't keeping pace. We needed an electronic system that would make us much more efficient. Instead of getting buried by our success, the accounting department needed to stay ahead of our growth."

-Ernie Bullard, Controller

Key Benefits

- Reduced document retrieval time by 97%, from 15 minutes to 30 seconds
- Eliminated 150 filing cabinets and will be able to repurpose 2,000 square feet of storage space
- Saved 40 hours during end-of-the-year financial audits
- Avoided hiring more employees for document archiving during business growth spurts of more than 16%
- Improved employee morale by empowering staff to efficiently manage information

two people had to look for a single record. Year-end financial audits were also a problem. Auditors needed to review countless records, and one employee spent a week retrieving the documents requested.

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The Solution

Bullard wasn't familiar with ECM systems when he started investigating options, so he looked at a variety of products. When comparing solutions, he found that PaperVision Enterprise was easy to use, scalable and flexible. Later, Bullard found out that the eastern region of UNFI, which operates separately, was already using PaperVision Enterprise. Although uniformity was a small factor in his choice, Bullard selected Digitech Systems' technology, because PaperFlow and PaperVision Enterprise provide a comprehensive ECM system that offers document imaging, management functionality and excellent value at a reasonable cost.

In April 2007, DataBank implemented PaperFlow and PaperVision Enterprise. Within a week, installation was complete and DataBank began staff training. Instead of going back to scan all archived documents, UNFI decided to select a cut-off date after which all new documents would be scanned. This approach helped UNFI get started quickly. Employees scan and index documents onsite using PaperFlow. Then, they are automatically uploaded to PaperVision Enterprise. Today, more than 2.5 million pages are effectively managed in the ECM system.

Recognized Benefits

The accounting department's biggest ECM benefit is improved productivity. The electronic system puts information at their fingertips, and staff members retrieve documents from the ECM system in seconds. Now, documents are never misplaced, and the accounting team spends more time focused on their primary job duties. As a result, employees save nearly 15 hours each week and have the documented evidence they need to resolve any invoice disputes. By increasing efficiency, UNFI avoided hiring new employees to manage their increasing number of invoices.

The ECM system is helping UNFI make room for future growth. While archived records in the warehouse will be kept until they reach the seven-year retention period, the file room with 150 filing cabinets is almost empty. "The anniversary of when we moved to the ECM system is an important date for us, because it means we are one year closer to managing all our billing documents electronically," said Bullard. "Every time we transfer older documents over to the warehouse, we clear out more space." The file room is already slated to become office space for new employees, and the warehouse space will store products instead of documents.

Financial audits were always a burden, but not anymore. The department gains 40 hours of productivity by storing all documents electronically in a single searchable system. While maintaining security, they allow auditors direct, temporary access to PaperVision Enterprise. After only a few minutes of training, auditors use the powerful, yet simple search functionality to quickly find the records they need.

"Since implementing PaperVision Enterprise, I have noticed a huge improvement in employee morale. Our staff is empowered to quickly and effectively manage the information they need to do their jobs."

-Ernie Bullard, Controller

Because of their success and the results achieved with DataBank's implementation of PaperVision Enterprise, UNFI is expanding their use of the ECM system. The business analysis department will begin using it to effectively manage pricing and deal tracking documents, turnover

reports and facility leases. They are also considering expanding their ECM solution to help the human resources department cut costs and maximize productivity.

About DataBank IMX

DataBank is a nationwide imaging and document management solutions and services provider with nine production centers strategically located throughout the U.S. They deliver services, technologies, tools and methods to capture, manage, store, preserve and deliver end-to-end solutions for their clients. DataBank has been an authorized Digitech Systems reseller since 2004. In 2008, Digitech Systems recognized DataBank as a Circle of Excellence reseller for the third time. To learn more about DataBank IMX, visit their website at www.databankimx.com or call 1.800.873.9426.