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WHITE PAPER

What Exactly is Document Management Anyway?

What you might not know

For every company that creates documentation

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The Past is in the Past, where it belongs

What are some of the words you would use to describe what Document Control is?

Clerical, administrative, filing, distribution service, records?

What about words like bottleneck, red tape, slow or necessary evil?

I have heard these and so many more, some that are not appropriate for a professional paper such as this one, but regardless of what the word is that you would use, it is all evidence of what the field of Document Management has been – mostly misunderstood by both those who perform the work, and by those who require the service.

Why is it so important then to understand this old yet up and coming service?

For a few reasons actually;

- Governing agencies are starting to require more and more documentation to prove compliancy of their standards and requirements
- As a result, organizations are pushing the requirements downstream to their contractors or suppliers, without understanding the consequences of that action; causing rising costs of supply to accommodate the demand and a scramble to provide documentation deliverables with little consideration for the actual requirements of content, approval, authentication or management
- Courts require evidence of due diligence and not only documented processes and procedures, but proof of practice too
- Public pushback on environmental and safety concerns can cause a delay or cancellation of projects, whereas if documentation can be provided showing all possible improvements and safeguards have been done; particularly in the safety, quality, and environmental impact and risk mitigation, the projects have a greater chance of continuing on
- Liability concerns are rising as companies tend to carte blanche the creation of a multitude of forms and documents with little regard to the traceability or cohesion of the data contained therein

- There is a shift in the type of contracts between companies, as distrust is rampant due to the lack of setting documentation deliverable expectations; creating a "want more for less" demand. This will damage many companies through no fault of their own unless they have established standards of documented deliverables to rely on
- Concurrent work and projects are common place, and currently the confusion and cost and schedule impacts have to be written into the project plan as a norm (this, by the way, is what I would call a Band-Aid not a solution)

So what *is* Document Management then?

Document Management is the principal authority that encompasses and governs all the divisions (elements) within that field of service. It is more than the commonly used Document Control, and a completely different service to Records and Information Management.

It is the overall workflow of documentation and information within, and external to, an organization. It covers aspects such as identifying documentation deliverables and expectations at the beginning of a project, utilizing scoping tools to ensure adequate resources, encourages and provides a platform for cross-functional communication and understanding, and systemizes the progression of any given project. Document Management takes all departments and divisions into consideration when establishing naming conventions, system structures and inter departmental touch points. It is the **umbrella that lays the foundation for the systems of quality and documentation governance** for Document Control, Corporate Document Control, Vendor Document Control and Native Drawing File Management.

The Document Control division

Document Control is the process of ensuring documentation which is handed over to the DC Department for processing follows the processing procedures. The Procedures for Document Control will cover aspects such as pre-processing quality checks; correct issue stages are adhered to, appropriate numbering and revision stages are reflected, ensuring traceability and project standards are met, etc. It will

certify that the purpose of the content of the drawing or document is clearly identified mitigating misrepresentation of information. It ensures accurate distribution, upload/storage and security.

The number one role of Document Control is safety through quality; ensuring that legal and regulatory requirements are met. This could also be referred to as Publishing or Engineering Document Control.

The Corporate Document Control division

Corporate documentation is documents and drawings that are utilized by an organization to ensure that the minimum standards are always met, and consistency is obtained across all business units and projects. It certifies that the personnel within a company understands how that company expects work to be performed. It also provides a basis for the expectations on any given project.

Corporate Document Management is the process by which this documentation is created, reviewed, updated, and distributed. It ensures that project specific deviations are created if required. The management of the corporate documentation requires a high level of control during continual improvement and updating processes to ensure that changes do not inadvertently affect other departments or existing projects in a negative manner.

The Vendor Document Control division

Vendor Document Control deals with receiving documentation from vendors, manufacturers or service suppliers. This includes manufacturers receiving documentation from their sub-vendors or fabricators. It is the process by which the expectations are set for each particular order at the quote and thereafter purchase stage, including schedule, file format, final documentation and review expectations. A DDR (Documentation and Data Requirements) form – also known by other names – is created and completed, and then presented for discussion and agreement. This one document and its supporting processes will mitigate the majority of the frustrations surrounding **managing incoming third party supplier information**; both from the supplier's and from the receiver's perspective and includes the expedition of those documents to avoid delays. This is the area where the majority of the

corrections made will have the greatest impact on operations and cost.

The Native Drawing File Management division

Native Drawing files include MicroStation, AutoCAD, SolidWorks, NavisWorks, and a host of other modifiable file types. Management of these files is highly detailed and intricate, and to achieve the appropriate level of training to manage the files, their x-reference files and concurrent projects is intense and lengthy.

The process involves not only the same requirements as managing other elements of Document Management, but it includes the support, understanding and management of the x-reference files and their relationships to the parent files. It involves the control of the modifiable files in a strict chain of custody (as in evidence in a police investigation) and an awareness of the methods and risks to concurrent engineering.

The Site Document Control division

Site Document Controllers have to deal with the incoming documentation that is required to be distributed to the construction teams, as well as understanding the requirements and workflows of the documentation that is generated out at the work site. These could be reports, results, requests for information, quality and inspection documents or design change requests. They need to process and maintain the integrity of site inventory documentation that leads directly into the asset management, change management plans and schedules of engineered drawings due to maintenance or small alteration projects, and preservation reports to name a few.

Getting down to it

Now that we have seen the different divisions of Document Management, the real problem now lies in that the majority of Document Controllers and organizations have no idea all this exists. Historically Document Controllers have been in an administrative role and transferred into this function. For years, there has been no training or education available. There have been no gurus or written standards for them to learn from.

There have been individuals who have been exposed to situations that have created expertise in a particular problem, but the majority will have a background of Records Management or Software Development, or no background training at all.

Through no fault of their own, Document Controllers have been adding to the problem of managing information. They have relied on antiquated processes and methodology stemming from the perspective of managing a library, and have damaged the image of what Document Control (and therefore Document Management) is and should be. As mentioned, there are many terms and phrases used to describe Document Management and 'fast', 'effective' and 'a god send' are not often some of them.

What about Records Management?

Records and Information Management is a vital part to many companies, and there has been training in this field for many years, but if we look at the definition of a record, it is of a document that is at the end of its lifespan, not concerning its entire lifecycle.

Records Management is critical to the proper long term storage, retrieval and destruction of records.

What steps are needed to resolve this widespread problem?

There are three main components to the solution to this problem, which I will outline next.

Education

Education is a key factor for most people who want to perform their job functions to the best of their capabilities. Providing training, education and support will greatly benefit all those Document Controllers who have been working at it for 15+ years as well as the juniors new to this service, or those wanting to progress into a new career – speaking of which, the education, training, certification and creation of the standards is creating a new career, instead of a multi-decade old job that has not provided the service it should have.

Education is also key for those Document Controllers who have been around for many years because even without training, they have seen so much in their lives that once they are trained and taught the specifics of all the different divisions, they have more experience to pull from to apply it to the real world.

Currently, there is a course offered at SAIT Polytechnic in Calgary Alberta, and whitepapers such as this to aid in the education of both organizations and Document Managers/Controllers.

Any goal that achieves the betterment of a group is a worthy goal.

National Certification in Document Management

The certification has two main goals; the education, training and mentorship of resources, and the establishment of best in class practices in Document Management.

The concept is simple - provide a vast pool of resources who understand the best practices and create a platform for ingraining great standards for organizations to aspire to.

There is otherwise no gauge for employers to know what they are getting. Currently in Document Control, number of years of service does not always equate to number of years of growth in expertise.

If an employer can utilize an internal or external consultant to identify what type of Document Management division mostly pertains to their needs, and there are industry standard specific job descriptions for those roles, then would it not make sense that the certification ensures growth and training to the point they can hire a level one, two or three Document Manager (for example) and know what they will get?

The certification program is in progress and is scheduled for deployment at the end of 2014.

Company Standard Procedures, Processes and Understanding

Companies probably have the most to gain when it comes to the understanding of what Document Management is, both from an operational perspective as well as from an employer perspective.

When it comes to operations, to understand Document Management is to understand the need for the systems and standards that not only create an environment where your core business can thrive without the hassle

of miscommunication in its many ugly forms, but it also means you have the processes in place to ensure a good quality operation, ultimately leading to more efficient systems designed to protect all essentials of your company.

If you have already reached the point where you recognize the need for a Document Control department or group, you may begin the search for someone who has been doing Document Control or Records Management for 15 or more years. This would make sense; hire someone who has seen it all, someone who has perfected their processes and can mentor the juniors, someone who can take their vast wealth of knowledge and reproduce it into Procedures and Work Instructions.

Unfortunately this is not necessarily what you will find. And what is worse, is if you do not learn what Document Management is, you won't realize what is lacking in your new hire. The other major factor is that the Senior Document Controller may not even realize what they don't know.

What does it mean for your company?

Well, the standards are being set, the plan to create the required resources is underway, and the next step is to start working on your processes. As there are not too many holistic and properly trained Senior Document Managers out there yet (and like a good man, they are probably taken) you may have to turn to a consultant.

There will be an initial investment into the creation of your standards and even the procurement of software as a tool (see the Whitepaper "The Six Steps to Accurate Document and Asset Management Software Selection" located on www.dms360.ca for additional information on software).

Pause though to consider the total cost of ownership of these standards:

- Higher initial cost to hire a consultant
- Procedures are well written (scalable, efficient and fit for purpose and culture) and in line with forming industry standards and regulatory requirements
- Lower long term costs in hiring an Intermediate or even Junior

- Custom and one on one training of Intermediate or Junior resource
- Appropriate software selection based on actual functional requirements instead of being based on hearsay or good salesmen

By understanding Document Management, you can better prepare your organization and equip it with standards, resources and support its needs to be a front runner in your industry and service field.

Conclusion

This is an exciting turning point for the field of Document Management and a much needed one. It will not only bring those companies that work with it into a more competitive position globally, but will assist Canada in surpassing other countries who have already begun to go down a similar path.

Extra courses already in development:
"Understanding Vendor Document Control and Expediting"
"All you need to know about Managing Modifiable Files"

Courses will soon be taught in the Toronto area.

Setting the standards in Document Management will provide a platform for the improvement of all EDM Systems.

Document Management includes ISO standards in its core concepts.

In the future, organizations who proclaim they have Document Management will have to align with the requirements of all these divisions.

A BIT ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bernadette Bosse has over 13 years of experience with the energy and mining sectors as a Purchaser, Inventory Controller, Expeditor and Document Controller.

She has been involved in all facets of the progression of a project, and has created and implemented Document Management, Drafting, Project Management, Procurement, Quality and Asset Management systems and processes.

Being a part of, and assisting others with, adequate project scoping and estimating regarding information, deliverables and flow of documentation within all departments, as well as working closely with Project Cost Controls gives her the holistic viewpoint that is required to establish thoughtful and well planned processes.

Bernadette currently owns and operates a consulting company of Subject Matter Experts that specializes in Information, Documentation and Communication Management. dms360 Ltd. performs analyses of companies and their practices, and works with them to create and implement customized processes, procedures and systems based on best practices and regulatory requirements. dms is setting the Document Management standards.

dms360 Ltd. is the leader and pioneer in Document Management, and is actively expanding from Western Canada into Eastern Canada, the US, and internationally, and as such their focus is on the entire communication and information flow in an organization. They set high standards while maintaining efficiency, and assist companies in achieving great success in their projects, in their corporate structure while helping to protect them from loss of evidence complications in the event of litigation.

dms360 Ltd. is also an APEGA group member service provider, and is in contact with other regulation agencies.

Evaluating systems and processes, establishing standards and procedures, resource placement and training, implementation plans and follow-up consulting make these services a long awaited must have. With a vast range of knowledgeable personnel, dms also strives to bring the same level of excellence to Drafting/Design, Procurement, Project Controls and Project Management.

Their focus is to assist companies in understanding the processes that suit their specific needs, setting up and documenting those processes, migrating data and educating internal personnel to set them up for continued success, and then handing over the reins to the company for their sustained internal progress.

Bernadette also teaches the Project Document Management course at SAIT; a technical and applied course which she wrote to enable growth of the industry as it pertains to Document Management. This course is the basis of a set of additional courses under construction and is on the preliminary requirements list for a nationwide certification in Document Management due for launch end of 2014.

You can visit dms360 Ltd. at their website, www.dms360.ca or email Bernadette at bbosse@dms360.ca