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CASE STUDY

LEGAL, MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT
INDUSTRY

City of Torrance, California

From disarray to digital powerhouse: transforming the city attorney's office

CHALLENGE

- Completely paper-based workflow
- No systematic method for retrieving previously created documents resulting in significant rework
- Inefficiencies resulted in the need to outsource 75% of legal work at \$250 to \$350 per hour
- City was a target for frivolous lawsuits because of its inability to effectively respond

STRATEGY

- eCopy ShareScan®, eCopy Desktop™, and the eCopy ODMA Connector were combined with RainMaker/Summit and Interwoven to provide a cohesive information management strategy
- eCopy Connector for RightFax® ensures accurate tracking and easy retrieval of faxes
- eCopy solutions migrating into other City departments based on its success in the City Attorney's office

RESULTS

- Nearly 300 cubic feet of file cabinets eliminated, easing space constraints
- 95% of legal work now performed in-house at \$75 per hour with no increase in man-hours
- Administrative staff reduced from nine to five employees, saving the City an estimated \$240,000 annually
- Regained valuable office space by consolidating multiple functions in a single piece of office equipment

ABOUT CITY OF TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA

The City of Torrance is the sixth largest city in Los Angeles County, with a population of about 150,000. Its City Attorney's Office employs 15 people in four locations, including eight attorneys, five legal secretaries, an IT Analyst and a Law Office Administrator. John Fellows, a technologically savvy attorney, left private practice a decade ago to assume the appointed role of City Attorney. Describing itself as "The City with a Hometown Feel," Torrance prides itself in its ability to compete globally through its myriad of assets: diverse residents, thriving businesses, and safe communities.

"eCopy is a critical element of our imaging strategy. Its ability to integrate with our content management system, our case management system, and RightFax makes it extremely easy for our staff to electronically process documents that arrive in hardcopy form, link them to the appropriate matter, and then retrieve and distribute them with ease."

— **Linda Santos**
Law Office Manager
City of Torrance, California

JOHN FELLOWS, CITY ATTORNEY, FOUND THE DEPARTMENT IN DISARRAY...

His challenge was to transform what was sometimes known as "the black hole of City Hall" into an efficient, functional legal operation that offered a best-practices model of accessibility, transparency, and efficiency. With no cohesive information management strategy and a completely paper-based workflow, documents were difficult to locate and often only the attorney involved in a particular matter had any idea where important documents could be found, thus the "black hole" moniker.



City of Torrance Case Study

In fact, the inefficiencies were so severe that relatively little legal work was actually getting done in house, and the City was spending significant dollars to out-source 75% of its legal work to outside counsel who billed the City at \$250 to \$350 per hour, compared to an internal cost of \$75 per hour.

“We also suspected that the City was viewed as a relatively easy mark by plaintiffs’ attorneys,” says Linda Santos, Law Office Manager, “since it appeared we were incapable of defending ourselves against even patently frivolous lawsuits.”

ECOPY SHARESCAN AND ECOPY DESKTOP WERE PART OF THE STRATEGY...

to make information more accessible. These solutions were combined with the City’s Interwoven document management solution and Rainmaker SUMMIT case management system to make it simple for anyone in the office to locate any needed information, even if they had not previously been involved with a given matter. Documents are scanned using ShareScan at the MFP or with desktop scanners using eCopy Desktop, annotated as necessary, converted to searchable PDF, and electronically filed, emailed or faxed.

eCopy’s success in the City Attorney’s office has resulted in other City departments adopting eCopy as well, including the City Council & Mayor’s Office, the City Manager’s Office, the City Clerk’s Office, the Finance Department, and the Transit Department. The City is now using 75 licenses of eCopy Desktop, with additional departments being added to the mix as time goes on.

TODAY, THE CITY ATTORNEY’S OFFICE OPERATES EFFICIENTLY WITH A NEARLY PAPERLESS WORKFLOW...

Documents are scanned to eCopy Desktop using either a desktop scanner or the eCopy ShareScan at an MFP and stored to Interwoven using a direct interface. Documents can be faxed if necessary using eCopy’s RightFax connector directly from eCopy Desktop. This ensures an audit trail for all emailed, filed, or faxed documents and makes it easy to re-send a document if the recipient does not receive it for some reason. With the option to scan from the desktop or the MFP, users do not waste time waiting at the copier to scan documents.

By including eCopy in its information management deployment, the City Attorney’s Office has:

- Eliminated nearly 300 cubic feet of file cabinets in a space constrained environment
- Reduced administrative staff from nine employees to five, saving \$240,000 annually
- Handled 95% of cases in house at \$75 hour instead of at the \$250 to \$350 rate charged by outside counsel

Another benefit of the more accessible information enabled by eCopy is the ability for attorneys to quickly check matter-centric documents to determine whether a question has previously been asked and answered rather than being required to answer the same question multiple times. This has allowed them to respond to inquiries more quickly with less research work and eliminate non-productive, redundant efforts. The City Attorney’s office now runs like a well-oiled machine. The City is no longer a target of plaintiffs’ attorneys and its “black hole” designation has faded away. “The transformation of our office could not have come at a better time,” says Santos. “Los Angeles County courts initiated ‘Fast-Track’ shortly after our implementation with a goal of moving 90 percent of cases to trial within one year, where historically cases had a five-year window. eCopy was an important contributor to our ability to meet these aggressive timelines.”

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