

Processing paperwork

How to streamline and automate HR's workload with document management

INTERVIEWED BY JAYNE GEST

The vast array of documentation around a single employee would surprise most people, but not those in human resources.

There are usually between 100 and 200 pieces of documentation that need to be part of the employee record throughout their work lifespan, says Nano Zegarra, director of the Imaging Solutions Division at Blue Technologies Smart Solutions.

This paperwork continues to add up during each employee's time at a company as he or she adjusts benefits, gets married, starts traveling, switches departments or makes other key changes.

Records of these changes must be kept for a certain amount of time for compliance purposes, even after someone leaves your company. The management involved can be labor-intensive and inefficient.

"It's a lot of paperwork, but that's how you protect your organization in a society that has become very litigious," Zegarra says.

With a document management solution, the process is streamlined with fewer steps and faster turnaround, while the records are less likely to be misplaced, out of date or redundant. The systems also build in accountability with a detailed history that is useful for auditing.

Smart Business spoke with Zegarra about how document management can assist HR in better managing employee records throughout their time at your company.

How do document management solutions specifically benefit HR?

HR by nature is very organized. Most HR departments already have manual processes for on-boarding new employees, handling changes, tracking reviews and more. But paper processes are more likely to result in lost or forgotten pages, in addition to

being time intensive.

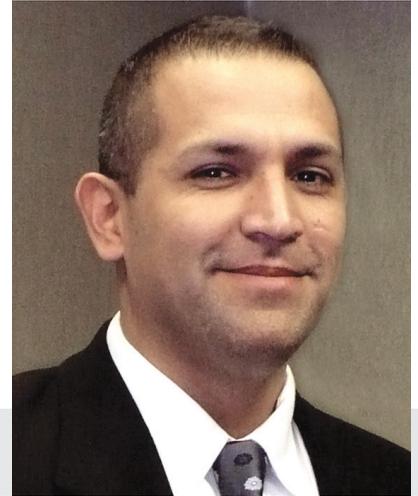
Alternatively, with document management systems, it's easy to quickly and accurately track and share records at any time across departments. This enables quick decision-making, significantly reducing downtime and speeding up review and filing processes. An electronic solution also allows you to give employees access to certain aspects of their own records, which cuts down on the questions and requests that go through HR.

With the help of technology experts, document management solutions can either be integrated with an existing HR system or become a new system.

What about companies that don't want to move entirely to electronic files?

Implementing document management doesn't mean you need to get rid of paper copies, but it will eliminate time spent paging through records at a file cabinet. Move these to a storage area or basement instead, for back up purposes.

It is worth noting that an electronic document is considered a legal document in Ohio. Some companies have started using electronic versions almost exclusively, such as W-4s with electronic signatures. Employees can easily read and acknowledge new policies and procedures on computers or tablets, as opposed to submitting paper copies of each confirmation for HR to store.



NANO ZEGARRA

Director, Imaging Solutions Division
Blue Technologies Smart Solutions

(216) 271-4800, ext. 2260
nzegarra@BTOhio.com

WEBSITE: For more information on how document management can benefit your business, visit www.btohio.com/products-services/imaging-solutions.

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When considering value, how does document management make sense for growing companies?

When you look at HR, there is no ROI. It's not producing anything, but it does cost you. As companies grow, these costs only continue to increase as HR has more information to track and policies and procedures to document.

However, if you're looking to save on adding another associate during such growth, document management can ensure your existing HR staff continues to efficiently manage employment processes and relevant documents — the most arduous parts of HR.

And while employers think these solutions are expensive, a basic document management solution is very affordable — especially when you look at the time saved and efficiencies added.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Once you add document management to handle HR processes, those processes will change five or six months down the road. You'll find more inefficiencies in your process as it becomes clear that certain steps aren't needed, verification is being duplicated, etc. You can continue to improve from there, because when you start automating processes, it builds on itself. ●