

Customer Success Story

Northern Natural Gas



Enterprise Content Management

Northern Natural Gas maintains various types of technical and business records (e.g., engineering drawings, survey notes, engineering design data) in CAD files, microfilm and paper formats. Historically, NNG relied on paper and microfilm for records storage. Majority of its engineering drawings were stored on microfilm aperture cards- great for archives- but not easily accessible. Paper documents, however, were largely one-of-a-kind and not individually indexed. People in various departments used these documents on a regular basis. Consequently, documents were often lost or misfiled, and record retrieval consumed hours of clerical and professional time. The need to connect paper/ microfilm engineering drawings with the CAD system, combined with the need to access, reproduce and distribute engineering records more effectively, influenced the decision to implement a document management system.

During the initial phase of implementation, the document management system was loaded with indexed images of paper, microfilm drawings and documentation. Scanned images of old drawings were imported into the CAD system to create new drawings or modify originals. In addition aperture cards were rescanned and digital images were stored on optical disks and all the indexing information was preserved. Customer relied on in-house technical staff managed the majority of conversion of paper drawings to optical. To prepare for this process, one employee attended (one week) training to learn the basics of document scanning. Softech provided additional training in small-document scanning, indexing, retrieval and system administration.

Benefits

- Dramatically increased productivity by moving to a paperless environment
- Lower cost of ownership
- Regulatory compliance requirements.
- Disaster recovery

According to NNG's manager of engineering records, training engineers and designers to use the imaging system was similar to teaching any desktop-like PC application, only slightly more complex. The company can now fax 8.5 x 11 inch and 8.5 x 14 inch images to locations from the system or any PC with image view capability. In addition, NNG is planning on using the imaging system to accommodate other corporate users and applications. The system was designed with expansion in mind and can handle considerably more data and users.

About Northern Natural Gas

Northern Natural Gas is based in Omaha, Nebraska, and operates an interstate natural gas pipeline extending from the Permian Basin in Texas, to the upper Midwest. It employs over 1100 people and operates over 16,600 miles of natural gas pipeline. NNG provides transportation and storage services to approximately 75 utilities and numerous end-use customers in the upper Midwest.