



White Paper: Data Capture and Document
Management Systems – 10 Tips and
Information Nuggets That Will Save
You Time, Money, and Hair

Tip 1: Buying a Data Capture or Document Management System on Price Alone Can be Dangerous to the Health of Your Business

by Ed Bross

Today's economy has everyone, consumers and businesses alike, pinching their pennies; only spending when absolutely necessary. Everyone is watching their cash, regardless of the size of the purchase. And technology products are not immune to the economic downturn or purchasing behaviors of consumers or businesses either. But letting today's down economy drive a long term business decision, such as buying a data capture or document management system, could leave you in an unhealthy position when the economy turns around. For example, you may be tempted to purchase a cheaper document management system now that just meets your present needs with your current volumes but doesn't scale well or have advanced features like workflow. In that case we caution 'Buyer beware'. Because in one to two years you may be stuck trying to explain to management and users why your system can't handle the increase in volume or why you can't make the business more efficient because your system doesn't have advanced web enabled capabilities and business process management functionality.

Scalability

When considering a data capture or document management system, you should be very aware of the ability for the system to expand as your business expands. Low end 'budget' systems may be very appealing with low inception costs and a good sales pitch that the system will meet all your needs. But the old adage that you get what you pay for holds true with data capture and document management systems, just as it does with anything else you may buy. A low end, inexpensive system may work well for a period of time, just like buying a cheap car, but as you drive your volumes to increase, more users are added, and as you ask the system to do more, the system will eventually break down – just like a cheap car will if you drive it too fast over rough roads with too many passengers. Add in the costs of extra support, increased downtime, possible impacts to business data, and just plain stress, and you will quickly realize that the initial lower cost of the system is quickly eaten up over time with higher support costs and inefficient processes.

Integration

A low end, 'budget' data capture or document management system also may not provide robust or easy integration with various software products. This need for integration with other software products has been fairly standard over the years but it is becoming even more apparent as many companies adopt collaboration portals like Microsoft Sharepoint, which store a large amount of documents and data, but which needs to be integrated with a data capture and/or document management system to be really effective. Integration comes with a cost, but a well designed data capture or document management system will allow easy extensions to the software to be built, thereby reducing the integration costs and allowing for more flexibility.

Customization

Additionally, a business need may arise that was not identified during requirements gathering and after you have finished your data capture or document management system implementation. Once this business requirement is determined, the system may have to undergo extensive customization which often times carries a hefty price tag. Worse yet, you may be limited to how much you can customize the system which would be a major 'gotcha' when buying a cheaper system. Workflow is a good example. Often, after using the system for a certain period of time, businesses realize that they can be much more efficient in how they route and handle documents if they can setup flexible electronic document processing workflows. Generally speaking, cheaper systems do not include workflow as part of their system. So if you bought the cheaper system that doesn't include workflow, now you have a problem. You already bought the system but you can't increase efficiencies and reduce costs by using electronic workflow because your system doesn't have it. Now you have to explain to your business users and management why they can't be more efficient. That is no fun.

We agree that a scalable, easily integrated, easily customized feature rich data capture or document management system will generally speaking not be your cheapest solution. However, data capture and document management systems should be viewed as a long term investment that should become an integral part of your daily business process and not just a short sighted investment that is based on initial costs. The point is that you can always buy a Volkswagen Beetle if you just want to get from point A to point B but if you really need a Mercedes then converting your Volkswagen into a Mercedes will probably cost you more in the long run than just buying the Mercedes in the first place.

About UFC Inc.

UFC Inc. is a consulting, integration and solutions firm preferred by clients worldwide for our quality, innovation and integration expertise. UFC provides data capture, enterprise content management software, support and integration services - based on a flexible architecture and common set of applications for collecting, classifying, retaining, migrating, securing and accessing information – all at the lowest cost of ownership.

Unlike vendors that deliver generalized ECM products with centralized or consolidated architectures, or support few applications and data types, UFC delivers the most comprehensive solution, specifically tailored for the customer. The distributed nature of the solution along with UFC's extensive expertise and unique approach makes it ideal for companies with remote offices that have limited storage space, minimal IT infrastructure or technical support. Remote locations realize significant improvement in operational efficiencies, improved collaboration, a reduction in storage costs - without sacrificing centralized control or visibility of information. From capturing and processing vendor invoices, personnel information such as employment applications and human resource forms to capturing and storing engineering drawings, large contracts and correspondence, UFC provides their customers the ability to reduce paper transaction costs while increasing their data processing efficiencies.

Call us today to find out how we can help your organization at (248) 447-0100 or email us at sales@ufcinc.com.

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