



The Perfect Storm

As demand for services grows and budgets contract, the right ECM solution helps governments steer a straight course.

The recession has created a perfect storm of anxiety for state and local governments. Demands for public services have soared. In North Carolina, for instance, the number of people needing food assistance swelled by 231,000 between December 2007 and April 2009.

This summer, a north Texas TV station reported that applicants were lining up at 5 a.m. outside a Dallas food stamp office, and some people had waited months to receive their benefits. Members of the New York State Association of Counties complained that demand for unemployment insurance, food stamps and public health care was rising, while sales tax revenues had dropped by nearly 10 percent.

In this tough economy, governments cannot simply add more employees to satisfy burgeoning demand for services. In fact, many governments are seeing their staffs shrink. As the work force ages, governments are losing experienced employees to retirement. But tight budgets and hiring freezes make it impossible to replace those employees, let alone add more workers. Even as the economy starts to grow stronger, governments will take years to recover from the current era of revenue shortfalls and budget constraints.

When you need to get more done, but your resources are tight, the best plan is to become more efficient. Effective technology, implemented wisely, can help a government do business in a new



WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Investment Brings Quick Return

Economic pressures have forced local governments to find innovative ways to cut costs and Washtenaw County, Mich., is no exception. With reductions to its work force, remaining staff need to do more work in less time. It's no longer practical, for instance, to send employees from one office to another to get documents completed, reviewed, approved and signed.

The county's old document management system didn't provide the workflow functions the county needed to boost efficiency, said Kimberly Wraight, ECM coordinator of Washtenaw County. Upgrading that system would have been cost prohibitive, she said. And an upgrade wouldn't have provided all the functions the county required.

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— Kimberly Wraight, ECM coordinator, Washtenaw County, Mich.

The county had \$300,000 set aside in its IT budget for upgrading the existing document management product. After weighing all the pros and cons, county officials decided to use that money instead to invest in a new, full-featured ECM system.

OnBase offered the right solution at the right price, Wraight said. The fact that Hyland Software's integration partner, ImageSoft, would train the county's IT staff to develop workflow applications on their own was another big plus.

Washtenaw County started implementing OnBase in May 2006. Within 15 months, 15 of the county's 27 departments were using applications built on the ECM solution. The system currently holds about 4.5 million documents.

The investment in OnBase started to pay off quickly. Thanks to an ECM application developed for the Friend of the Court Office, for example, it now takes just one day, rather than seven to 10, to process a divorce or other domestic case.

Another application automates the process for requesting a warrant. By circulating paperwork electronically, rather than making officers drive it from place to place, the county and local police will save time and fuel, get accused criminals arraigned faster and free officers for more critical duties. "It's amazing, the difference in the time it takes," Wraight said.

Washtenaw County's investment in OnBase is well on the way to paying for itself. In its first year, the solution saved the county \$100,000. Ongoing savings in software maintenance should amount to \$50,000 a year, Wraight said, with additional "soft dollar" savings still to be determined.

And while it's hard to put a dollar figure on better customer service, that's another big benefit that OnBase delivers, as the technology frees employees to use their time more effectively. "Instead of pushing paper," Wraight said, "they're able to focus on providing direct services to citizens."

way, re-engineering processes, automating tasks and eliminating waste. These changes help save money while meeting the demand for more services.

An enterprise content management (ECM) solution such as OnBase® from Hyland Software provides an ideal vehicle for sailing through the economic storm that governments face today. By cutting out paper, automating labor-intensive processes, streamlining workflow and reducing the need for storage space, ECM reduces costs and eliminates busywork. That means governments can reassign employees from less productive tasks to jobs that provide greater value.



Hyland Software has been delivering ECM to state and local governments since 1991, so its experts know how to tailor an OnBase solution to a government's unique needs. And providing that solution doesn't require a year or more of expensive custom programming. OnBase is an off-the-shelf package, entirely point-and-click configurable, so OnBase applications get up and running fast.

The whole implementation cycle, from needs assessment through configuration, testing and deployment, takes as little as a couple of weeks and no more than a few months. A government can make the investment and start enjoying the returns in the same budget cycle, making an OnBase deployment a budget-neutral decision.

With an ECM system such as OnBase, you can transform your perfect storm of economic distress into a perfect opportunity to better serve the public.

OnBase
a Hyland Software solution