



“What Happened Next Was Nothing Short of Amazing”

How a plan to stop using Laserfiche instead inspires city-wide adoption in Albany, OR

To be honest, the City of Albany, OR, hadn't really been maximizing Laserfiche when its new Finance Director wanted to do away with using it altogether five years ago.

The city had installed Laserfiche in its Finance department in 1998 as a virtual file cabinet. “Between 1999-2003 we were only scanning a few thousand documents a month and it was limited to just the Finance department,” admits Allen Pilgrim, Network Administrator. By 2004, Laserfiche storage totaled just ten volumes of 4.6GB each. A significant number, but apparently not significant enough for one new city administrator. Pilgrim explains:

“That same year, we got a new Finance Director. We'll call her Brenda (not her real name). We were having our second weekly meeting with her and she blurted out ‘We're getting rid of Laserfiche.’ We were all shocked.”

Pilgrim took it upon himself to prove the system's worth. He went into what he calls “stealth mode,” personally approaching other departments about stepping up their use of Laserfiche, tactfully earning their trust and answering their concerns along the way. Simply put, Laserfiche had its internal champion, but the software ultimately sold itself, user by user, process by process, department by department.

“Most people were fearful of losing their precious paper. I sat down in meetings with people and just one on one made it clear that I was committed to ensuring the safety of their data,” Pilgrim explains. “As we progressed, people saw the evidence that I was serious.”

The Building division in Community Development was interested, for instance, but thought Laserfiche was limited for Finance. Pilgrim pointed out the annual maintenance had been moved to the IT budget, leaving Laserfiche open for intra-office adoption.

“What happened next was nothing short of amazing,” Pilgrim says. “The Building division latched onto Laserfiche as if it was the greatest thing they had ever seen.” Building's Allison Liesse began scanning all day, every day, eventually working with Pilgrim to purchase a wide-format scanner. IT Staff even came up with interface integration with the city's Accela PermPlus permitting software so that building inspectors could retrieve Laserfiche documents through the application. Within a year, storage jumped from 10 to 42 4.6GB volumes. Inspired both by Building's success and Pilgrim's handling of the implementation, Albany's Planning division came on board.

Organization Profile

The 12th largest city in Oregon, Albany is home to almost 49,000 residents.

Situation

The City had installed Laserfiche in its Finance Department as a “virtual filing cabinet.” But six years later, a new Finance Director wanted to get rid of the system entirely.

Solution

The City's network administrator took it upon himself to prove the system's worth, personally approaching other departments about expanding the use of Laserfiche. By 2006, Laserfiche was a standard install on every computer in Albany.

Benefits

- An interface integration with the City's Accela PermPlus permitting software enables building inspectors to retrieve documents from the application, minimizing training and saving time.
- The Building Division has saved hundreds of hours of work automating business processes with Quick Fields, including four hours a month formerly spent processing timesheets.
- The Police Department uses Laserfiche to automatically process thousands of reports each month, with a failure rate of less than 1%.

Laserfiche Components

Laserfiche Server™
 Advanced Audit Trail™
 E-Mail Plug-In™
 Import Agent™
 Laserfiche Toolkit™
 Quick Fields Pattern Matching™
 Quick Fields Agent™
 Quick Fields Real Time Lookup™
 Quick Fields Zone OCR™
 Snapshot™
 WebLink™

Around the same time, Paul Jacobson in the Public Works Engineering division was interested in Laserfiche. Pilgrim was able to, as he puts it, “give him an area in Laserfiche to play with.” Jacobson’s experience inspired his whole department to convert to using Laserfiche. “There was no longer any talk of getting rid of Laserfiche because it had become too valuable to the City and more people were using it all the time.”

By 2006, Pilgrim convinced Albany’s IT Director to add Laserfiche as a standard install on every computer in the city. Pilgrim notes that by then, IT was independent from Finance – and that “Brenda” had since moved on.

In 2008, the Police Department requested a demo. “They fell in love with the product,” Pilgrim says, who was soon requesting two high-end scanners and training several employees. By now Public Works was now doing all of their projects in Laserfiche. Operations also started doing more with Laserfiche, and Ambulance Billing has become, as Pilgrim puts it, “another Quick Fields success story.”

To deploy Quick Fields, Pilgrim worked with Albany’s new (post-“Brenda”) Finance Director to approve the purchase and implementation of Quick Fields following a demo by reseller Michael Dane of VPCI. “We determined it would be perfect for four departments and the benefits have been spectacular,” Pilgrim says.

- Allison Liesse in the Building Division says Quick Fields has saved her literally hundreds of hours of work, including saving four hours a month processing timesheets.
- Ambulance Billing reports are processed by Quick Fields, saving staff “dozens upon dozens” of hours.

- For the Police Department, processing thousands and thousands of police reports has been the biggest benefit - now that processing is fully automated and the failure rate is less than 1%. “Changing the slashes in the dates to dashes made all the difference,” Pilgrim notes. “Basically they just drop a stack of reports in the scanner and their job is done.”

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So far this year, Pilgrim has done demos for staff of the Municipal Court, which has since started using the system, as well as to Albany’s Fire Department. The City Manager’s office and HR are the latest additions, while Albany’s timesheet scanning has been automated with Quick Fields. Parks & Recreation is slowly but surely adopting. All of Purchasing’s paperwork is stored in Laserfiche.

“Most recently our GIS division had me set it up so they could move all of their As-Builts into Laserfiche,” adds Pilgrim.

Besides efficient (and satisfied) city employees in virtually every department, 2009 marks another Laserfiche milestone: the City of Albany will be only the third city in Oregon to launch “Digital Image as Original” (DIO), which will allow the city to maintain digital copies for many of our records, according to Pilgrim. “This will allow us to lead the way on being more green, because it’s fun being green.” And as Albany has proved, Brendas of the world be darned, it’s fun being efficient, too.

About Laserfiche

A resource for more than 27,000 public- and private-sector organizations around the world since 1987, Laserfiche creates simple, elegant document management solutions that help organizations run smarter. From streamlining digital records management to automating the agenda process, Laserfiche helps improve efficiency while integrating easily within any environment.

Your Next Step

Visit laserfiche.com/gov to get a free white paper on implementing an electronic document management system. Or call **(800) 985-8533** to get answers now.

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