



CASE STUDY

Clark County Keeps Pace with e-Document Delivery from RightFax and HP

There's no gamble on growth for Nevada—it's a sure thing. For nearly two decades, Nevada has held top ranking as the fastest-growing state in the U.S.

Effective communication with a growing population is a top priority for employees of Clark County, Nevada's most populated area. Unfortunately, the county's manual fax methods made handling critical documents more like a sand trap than a desert oasis.

BACKGROUND

Clark County (www.co.clark.nv.us) covers southern Nevada, including Las Vegas and surrounding areas. As home to 70 percent of Nevada's population, Clark County welcomes 5,000 new residents every month. A number of government divisions manage county services, which require efficient document delivery and receipt, including:

District Attorney's Office: Employing more than 570 professionals, the Department consists of four areas: the Criminal, Civil, Juvenile and Family Support divisions. In 2002, the legal divisions handled more than 36,000 cases while the Family Support Division collected more than \$74 million in child support.

Assessor's Office: With a staff of 180, the Office values all Clark County property subject to taxation. In addition to more than 531,000 parcels of real property (land, homes, commercial buildings), the Assessor must value approximately 70,600 other taxable properties.

Other county services relying on consistent flow of information include the Comprehensive Planning, Development Services, Air Quality Management and other departments. With related services, the departments combine to compose the core group of Development and Environmental Management.

CHALLENGE

Since 1990, the population of the Clark County "desert oasis" has risen 85 percent; with increased population comes increased work to manage county services. Time-intensive, manual faxing methods fell short of Clark County's requirements for efficient communication with county residents and businesses.

District Attorney's Office

"The growth in Las Vegas is insane, and our workload is growing at the same pace," John K. Beard, Information Technology Manager with the District Attorney's Office, said. Over the last couple years, the Department has doubled its fax volume to more than 15,000 pages per month.

"We needed an enterprise fax solution for improving productivity and enabling the capacity to handle all communication." – John K. Beard, Clark County District Attorney's Office

Information handled by the DA's Office impact community safety. For instance, when a person is arrested and jailed, the office has 48 hours to make the determination to prosecute and file charges. This often involves requesting information from the police department via fax. "If we're late completing the process," Beard said, "there are delay penalties and the accused 'bad guy' could go free."

With slow manual fax processes, seven secretaries were sending faxes and waiting for confirmations on one machine. "It was time-consuming," Beard said. "And that's not even counting times when the fax number was busy, there were paper jams or other delays."

The DA's Office must also subpoena officers or lay witnesses in a timely manner. To scan and fax subpoenas, the group used an HP Digital Sender, a solution for integrating paper documents into messaging and document management systems. Sometimes hundreds of subpoenas were sent to the same organization in one day. While the forms were delivered quickly, the law enforcement offices planned to mail them back to the DA's Office. "They wanted to use what we call the 'Thousand miler' system," Beard said. To be more efficient, the DA's office convinced officers to return forms via fax.

To handle inbound and outbound faxing, the DA's Office used a client fax server solution. "We were running one fax server on a Novell server, which wasn't a good combination," Beard said. "We also used an appliance type fax server, but it was a pain to deal with and had reporting issues."

Assessor's Office

While faxing is essential year-round, fax volume skyrockets at the Assessor's office during board of equalization hearings when taxpayers who are not satisfied with their property appraisal values present their cases to appraisers. "To prepare for hearings, we usually send faxes back-and-forth to customers and agencies to prove value or communicate with other tax payers," explained Courtney Hill, Systems Technician with the Clark County Assessor's Office. Since many property owners are outside Clark County, appraisers were often racking up long distance faxing charges.

Also, during busy times, the fax machines were worked overtime, according to Hill. "To reduce traffic," he said, "we actually had to assign specific people the additional responsibility of checking the machines and distributing faxes to people. It became a real pain."

Other county departments within the Office's were also finding manual faxing to cause aches and pains. To name a few:

The Development Services Department regulates construction on houses, casinos and other property and often must send as many as 700 faxes to various entities. "The Development Services office had one person who would send the faxes one at a time," Hill said. "It would take a week or two to send all of them out."

The Air Quality Management Department must send dust alerts during high winds so construction companies can take preventive measures. "The department was sending alerts by hand on a single fax machine—sometimes to as many as 2,800 contacts," Hill said. "Dust alerts are time-critical—if they aren't delivered fast enough, the companies who did not receive the alerts or take appropriate cautions cannot be fined."

For any of the departments, just sending one fax could take as much as 15 minutes, according to Hill. "Once you add in all the time to print documents, create a cover sheet, walk to the fax machine—but chat with Bob along the way—plug in the numbers, wait for confirmation and walk back to the desk—seeing Jan for a discussion—15 minutes would pass by quickly!"

SOLUTION

All the Clark County services looked for a way out of the faxing "sand trap." Hill said: "We wanted a way for our employees to send and receive faxes right from the desktop—a solution that would make communication faster and easier."

The DA's Office had the same need. Also, Beard added, "It was kind of a growing up. We were using old solutions in a simplistic manner that didn't offer advanced, but necessary, functionality. We needed an enterprise fax solution for improving productivity and enabling the capacity to handle all communication."

"Just calculating the RightFax outbound savings for our case-related faxes adds up to more than \$180,000 over three years."

District Attorney's Office... Growing Up

The DA's Office implemented Captaris RightFax, the proven market leader in enterprise fax and e-document delivery solutions.

"RightFax won over other solutions, including Castelle and Omtool, because it was more mature and a better fit for our business needs," Beard said. RightFax also integrates seamlessly with the existing Windows NT network and its HP Digital Senders.

"When we tied RightFax and our Digital Sender together, we saw there was no reason to buy or use any more fax machines," Beard said. Since implementing the integrated solution in 2000, Beard estimates the DA's Office has prevented the purchase of six fax machines worth several thousand dollars.

Employees checking new cases for prosecution have seen a "great productivity increase," according to Beard. "They're saving at least five minutes per fax by sending documents right from their desktops," he said. Rather than waiting at the fax machine for confirmations, secretaries are able to stay at their desks and continue working—faxes are sent from various applications while inbound documents and confirmations are automatically delivered to the Microsoft Outlook email Inbox.

"Just calculating the RightFax outbound savings for our case-related faxes adds up to more than \$180,000 over three years," Beard said. He quickly added that the estimate is "obscenely conservative." He explained: "If we extrapolated all the savings from RightFax and how it affects other contacts we would have a number that is not believable. It would blow your mind."

RightFax streamlined the subpoena process by allowing electronic inbound delivery. "It has saved us tremendously by making it easier to check for returned forms or store documents for retrieval," Beard said.

Beard also said RightFax is a "night and day" difference compared to previous limited implementations. "With our high volume, we need the RightFax enterprise tools to manage faxing."

In all, growing up to enterprise capabilities with RightFax helps the entire organization, to obtain and deliver information as quickly as possible for county safety and well-being. "With RightFax, we're better serving county residents," Beard concluded.

- **Then:** Manual faxing took 5 to 15 minutes per document.
- **Now:** Electronically delivering faxes from the desktop takes a few seconds.

Assessor's Office...Banding Together

Once the Assessor's Office and other departments determined their faxing needs, each submitted a request to finance. It was quickly noted that the entire group had a fax server need. "In 2000, we banded together to buy RightFax to service everyone," Hill explained. "It has worked out very well since then." One RightFax server supports the Assessor's Office and the Comprehensive Planning, Development Services and Air Quality departments.

The estimated 15 minutes to send a fax have been reduced to less than a minute for each group. With 700 Direct Inward Dial (DID) numbers, employees think RightFax is "best thing since sliced bread," said Hill. With a couple clicks, users can send faxes directly from Microsoft Word, Excel and a customized mainframe application. "And," Hill said, "when faxes come in, employees are right at their desks and receive it in Novell GroupWise email. That made them ecstatic."

Appraisers and other employees appreciate the control and speed with which faxes are delivered. Hill estimates thousands of dollars are saved every year since specific people are no longer required to take on the added responsibility of handling faxes for the group.

Even greater savings are returned as a result of a shared T1 line for all the departments. "Since the cost of RightFax is spread across three departments, the long distance savings have offered ROI quickly," he said. Other savings are garnered via saved supplies.

Due to the reliability and scalability of RightFax, Hill said it could be expanded to support even more departments. In fact, requests often come in. "Our offices are recognized as leaders in technology," Hill said. "And RightFax is one of the reasons why."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations of all sizes automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, archive, deliver). With a comprehensive suite of software and services, Captaris helps organizations to grow revenues and increase profits while meeting compliance goals. Through a global distribution network of leading enterprise technology partners, Captaris has installed more than 90,000 systems in 95 countries in companies of all sizes, including the entire Fortune 100. For more information, visit www.captaris.com or call 1.800.443.0806.

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