

Anchorage School District

Anchorage School District speeds personnel change processing with Lexmark multifunction products (MFPs) and Interact for Lexmark.

Challenge

Eliminating delays, improving information sharing

Though providing quality education is the goal of every school system, many aspects of this mission take place outside the classroom. For the Anchorage School District (ASD), automating personnel information changes was seen as a way to improve administrative productivity and save money that could be better spent on academics. ASD processes about three personnel information changes daily and more during peak periods, such as when new staff members join the district in late summer.

"Previously, doing an employee information change started with filling out a paper form and making copies that were routed via interoffice mail to three separate departments," said ASD Systems Analyst Jim Davenport. "When these copies reached our archiving department up to four days later, a staffer had to aggregate and reconcile the annotations written on each one."

A wayward copy meant revisiting the archive to update the aggregated notes. Delays in one department's processing could lead to an inaccurate status for the employee, potentially impacting access and services. Errors sometimes occurred which started the process again.

ASD believed it could do better by scanning the original form, routing it simultaneously to each department and collecting electronic notations, aggregating them instantaneously in real time. ASD was already an existing Lexmark customer and turned the company to create a solution.

Solution

Getting workflow set up in days

To speed the employee change process, reduce errors, improve archiving and cut costs, ASD installed a Lexmark MFP along with Interact® for Lexmark for imaging, routing and transaction processing. Interact for Lexmark enables direct, user-initiated capture from Lexmark MFPs, making documents instantly accessible via the network from Lexmark's Perceptive Content solution.

The idea, Davenport said, was to transform a repetitive manual process into an automated paper-free workflow that offered information-storage management and instant retrieval capabilities.

Meet Anchorage School District

Among the one hundred largest school systems in the United States, the 5,800 employees of Alaska's Anchorage School District serve nearly 49,000 students in 100 schools that span 2,000 square miles.

- ▶ Location: Anchorage, Alaska
- ▶ Employees: 5,800
- ▶ Students: 49,000

Products in use: Lexmark MFPs, Interact for Lexmark

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Jim Davenport

Systems Analyst
Anchorage School District

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Working with Lexmark, ASD defined its requirements. “Lexmark understood our needs and had the workflow in place in just a few days,” said Davenport. With its Lexmark MFP installed and networked, the solution was set up at ASD in seven to eight business days, pilot tests were completed in three days and the solution placed into production in less than 30 days.

Overcoming the limitations of paper

The process now begins at the front desk of ASD’s administration building. A staffer places the completed employee information change document in the MFP’s scanner, taps a custom icon on the color touchscreen operator panel, enters the employee’s identification number, then returns the form to the employee as a receipt.

The application validates the entry and confirms the scan was successful. Interact for Lexmark immediately routes the scanned image to ASD’s three departments simultaneously where associates update the appropriate records. Once all the changes are made and digital annotations are in place, the document image is archived. ASD no longer stores physical hard copies, saving on storage costs. Instantaneous electronic retrieval and routing eliminates the possibility of loss or misfiling.

Results

Speeding processing, enhancing auditability

Employee changes are now processed in about one day, accuracy is assured and errors nearly eliminated. “We rarely see an employee change that’s in transit more than one day,” said Davenport. “This workflow ensures that procedures are followed, that steps are no longer skipped, and that all steps happen in the proper sequence.”

While the goal of the project was to speed processing and cut costs, ASD is enjoying another benefit. “This solution enhances auditability, an important consideration in the rare event of litigation,” Davenport said. “With this solution, we know exactly when each task was done, by whom, and what changes were made.”

According to Davenport, the new process has given the team “pride of efficiency” because they can accomplish the same task in less time and serve employees better.

The experience of working together with Lexmark was one of partnership, said Davenport. “The ease of communication with Lexmark helped us get this project done quickly and successfully.”

With automated employee changes now in full production, ASD is actively planning for additional workflow improvements, including student records. “I’m looking forward to the day when all those file cabinets go away,” said Davenport.

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