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The new office paradigm

The way that organisations use their office space is changing radically - and perhaps permanently - and document management needs to be at the heart of that change, says Storetec's Grace Schneider

Low office occupancy rates make it clear that the UK has entered a new paradigm of how office space is used. A PwC survey claimed that 66% of UK employees worked either entirely or mainly at home during the pandemic. The houses of many workers became their places of work.

The return back to the office environment has been slowly inching forward since the start of the year, despite, in some cases, employers' efforts to coax staff back into the office. This is because employees who can and want to work from home do not see the benefits of being permanently office based.

According to another survey, this time by Gallup, the desire to work exclusively from home has more than doubled since October 2021. Over 60% of fully remote workers said they would be "extremely likely" to look

for other opportunities if their employer decided not to offer remote working at least some of the time during the working week.

The pandemic dramatically demonstrated how quickly businesses could adapt to new working practises: after all, they had no choice in the matter. The cultural change from a traditional office to an office/hybrid model is straightforward to implement as long as the business is fully supportive of the change.

MAKE THE CHANGE

In a recent meeting one prospective client told us they wanted to make the work environment more appealing to staff by putting in a new kitchen, offering free food and coffee machines, making a larger break-out area and implementing a number of wellness initiatives. This all needed to be achieved within the current office footprint



"DOCUMENT SCANNING IS BECOMING THE NEW BUSINESS NORMAL, WITH MANY ORGANISATIONS MOVING TO A PAPER-LITE FUTURE WORKING MODEL. HAVING YOUR DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE DIGITALLY REMOVES THE NEED TO STORE PAPER IN YOUR OFFICE, AGAIN SAVING SPACE... DIGITAL RETRIEVAL IS MUCH EASIER AND QUICKER THAN FINDING THE RIGHT DOCUMENT IN A FILING CABINET OR LEVER ARCH FILE: THE AVERAGE SEARCH TIME IS UNDER 10 SECONDS."

which was already bursting at the seams. It was clear from our discussions that they wanted to make some big changes; one of the easiest to put in place was the removal and digitisation of the paper documents.

Storing paper documents in your office or archive rooms can take up huge amounts of valuable space. With 16% to 20% of the space in a typical office taken up with paper storage, and a single filing cabinet occupying roughly nine square feet, any room you might have quickly disappears. This is space that could be utilised to improve the work environment. An office that isn't overflowing with paper is already a better, more comfortable environment for employees to work in.

Document scanning is becoming the new business normal, with many organisations moving to a paper-lite future working model. Having your documents available digitally removes the need to store paper in your office, again saving space. Your current, physical filing system can be replicated electronically to ensure the documents are structured exactly as they have always been, only digitally. Digital retrieval is much easier and quicker than finding the right document in a filing cabinet or lever arch file: the average search time is under 10 seconds. Additionally, digital access can prevent your document integrity and/or information security from being put at risk.

MOVE IT OFF-SITE

Within some businesses, document scanning may not be the right approach for all the paper documents - after all, if you will never look at the document again, why scan it? A hybrid approach may work out best. The hybrid model sees your less valuable and rarely accessed documents being stored physically in a secure off-site facility with fast retrieval access via a scan-

on-demand service. Your more precious, valuable and often accessed documents are digitised and available instantly. With this approach you benefit from a lower initial project cost, but immediately free up the space in the office.

There is a lot of evidence to show that employees work more productively when they have the independence to work wherever they want. Is your business agile enough to allow your employees to do this?

MORE SECURE, MORE FLEXIBLE

In addition to document scanning and off-site document storage, implementing a document management system will allow your organisation to not only tie together the scanned archive documents, but will allow newly generated ('born-digital') documents to be held securely in one location - effectively taking on the role of your central filing store.

With Storetec's new MS Office uploader you can add documents you are working on directly into our FreeDocs system. A copy of the selected file, whether it be an email, Word document, or presentation, will be added to the database of your choice - allowing all the accessibility, security, and other benefits of FreeDocs for your file immediately, all from your chosen Office product.

Do you have a scanning/storage project in mind? Or just want to explore the options? Contact our team of experts today. Our aim is to provide a hassle-free solution - we can even box your documents for you, ensuring they are safe and secure before leaving you. We are also available for Teams/Zoom calls at your request.

There are a number of options available to you, so why not start the conversation today?

More info: www.storetec.net