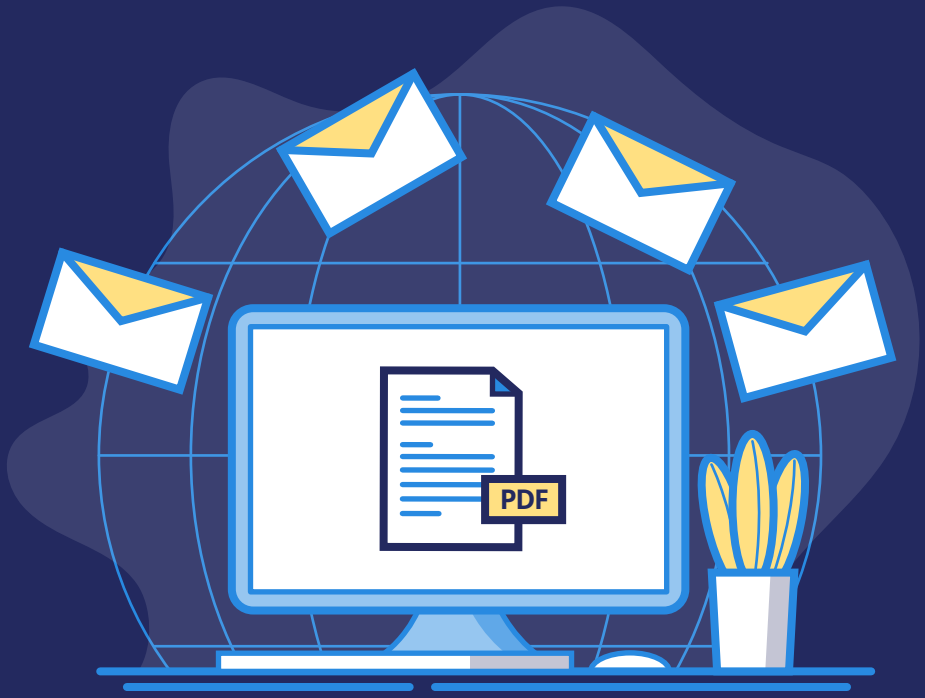
THE MODERN WORKPLACE: PAPER AND MAIL MANAGEMENT





Earth Class Mail

The Paper Less, Do More Company

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Introduction

The way we work has changed dramatically in the last decade as a result of the ubiquity of the internet and the development of robust, highly-affordable cloud-based applications. These advancements in technology have changed the way we conduct business, from how and where we work to how companies acquire customers.

The Paperless Movement in the Modern Workplace

Businesses have moved away from labor-intensive processes and are instead leveraging technological advances.

Companies that have digitized most key business processes and gone paperless have a clear advantage over those that don't. According to a study by McKinsey and Company on digital transformation," 49 percent of leading companies are investing in digital more than their counterparts do."[1]

Instead of using paper and risking the longevity and accessibility of information by relying on physical documents that change and become outdated, companies are digitizing information by using dynamic, shareable documents online. Because, "large organizations lose a document every 12 seconds," the move to paperless removes that liability.[2]

Today's most successful companies and entrepreneurs are not only going paperless but are embracing technology and digital transformation strategies for making processes and people more efficient, which in turn can improve customer and employee satisfaction.

"Improving customer experience delivers real benefits to companies that successfully execute customer-centric strategies," according to the research experts at McKinsey and Company. "Across sectors, satisfied customers spend more, exhibit deeper loyalty to companies, and create conditions that allow companies to have lower costs and higher levels of employee engagement."[3]



Paperless Movement

Data in the Cloud

Today, most of the information we access on a personal or work-related basis has been made possible by a combination of internet connectivity, cloud-based storage, and sophisticated software applications.

As a result of this instantaneous access to business-critical data, “The global Software as a Service (SaaS) market is projected to grow from $49 billion in 2015 to $67 billion in 2018,” according to Forbes.[4]

Cloud-based applications have improved and optimized many business functions that were previously only afforded by enterprise-sized competitors with behemoth budgets.

With the proliferation of SaaS, smaller companies can now afford the technology that helps them capture and store business-critical data and automate processes that previously required repetitive manual tasks.

Cloud-based applications also help to give structure to the data captured, which in turn, makes it easier to obtain and leverage business insights for course correction when it comes to company strategy and profitability.

For employees, there’s added benefit in the form of increased workplace satisfaction. [5] For example, cloud-based applications make it easier to find data with the help of a simple, customizable query. Gone are the days of searching through printed documents or file cabinets for hours, enabling employees to focus on more dynamic work.



Data in the Cloud

Digitizing the Workplace

A clear and celebrated advantage by many is that by moving business-critical data from the file cabinet to the cloud, it becomes available anytime, anywhere.

The ability to access work applications has improved engagement of remote employees, from field salespeople to frequently-traveling executives. It enables problem-solving to occur not only between normal business hours but whenever the employee has internet access and a laptop.

The evolution of how work is technologically enabled has transformed the workforce itself. The term “gig economy” was coined to describe a subset of workers that work typically on a temporary basis with their clients. According to CNN, the “gig economy is 34% of the workforce.”[6]

The number of full-time employees working remotely has also risen as a result of increasing workplace digitization. In a survey, Upwork reported that “a majority (63%) of companies have remote workers” and that “5X as many hiring managers expect more of their team to work remotely in the next 10 years than expect less.”[7]



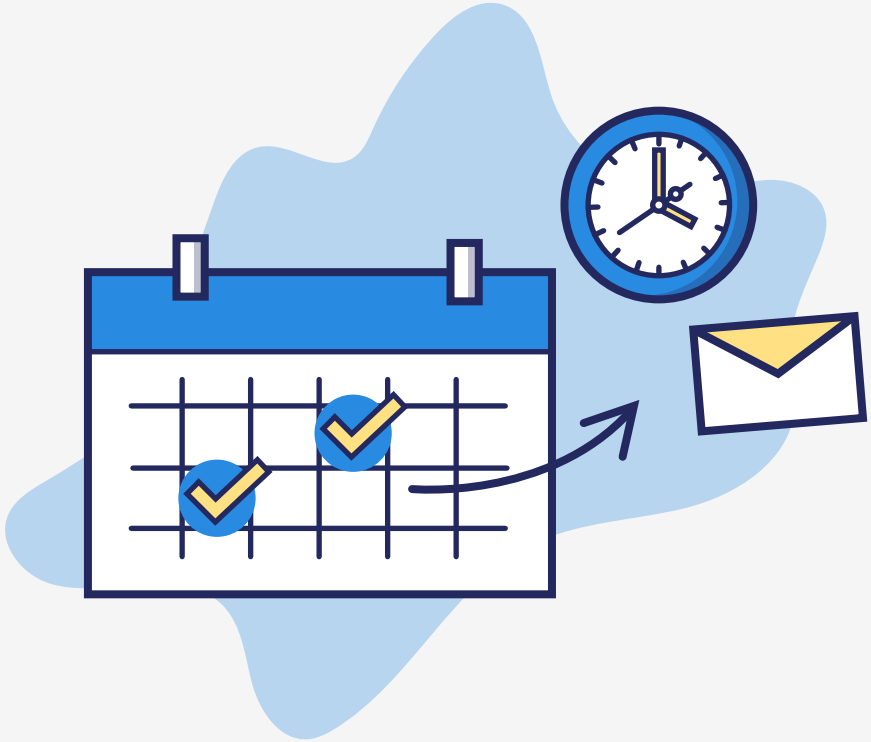
Remote Employees

Cloud-based Apps Aid in Automation

An additional advantage to digitizing the workplace is the automation that is typically built into cloud-based, SaaS applications.

Marketing teams, for example, clamor for such tools because it frees them up to focus on the more strategic work like content creation and analytics. Rather than rush into the office to send an email at 6 a.m. that needs to be sent to a subset of customers, marketers can schedule the email in advance.

While incorporating new business software does require a primary administrator to ensure smooth and optimal use, the resulting automation will save companies time and money.



Automation

Mail Management in the Cloud

Consider that each day,“4 93.4 million mail pieces are processed and delivered,” according to the USPS.

While personal correspondence mostly consists of junk mail and bills, for businesses, it’s quite the opposite. Mail can contain highly valued, time-sensitive information such as government notices, client information, and financial documents. As a result, onsite mail management has been a cost that companies have come to accept, despite the increasingly digital nature of their other business processes.

Physical mail inherently lacks what makes digitized processes and data beneficial. It’s not easily searchable, not necessarily secure, and almost certainly not immediately available. It requires someone to manage it, and the physical space to accommodate it.

Depending on the size of the company, sorting, processing, and managing mail can require additional staff. With a subjective, human-led process, mail may not get into the hands of the correct recipient, and may ultimately be misfiled or lost, creating a data gap and inefficiency.

Or consider a seasonal rush, like those experienced by tax accountants, when there is a seemingly never-ending flow of mail during one time of year. This can overwhelm the person responsible or the mailroom staff when the demand for attention to mail exceeds the hands on deck to handle it.

Nonetheless, the digital revolution has touched the way businesses handle their existing paper-based workflows and a constant source of paper: their business mail. Mail has moved to the cloud and continues to improve and optimize the way we work.



Mail Management

Considerations for Moving Your Business Mail Into the Cloud

Here are different facets of mail management services and platforms to evaluate an appropriate platform:

1. Mail intake: Online mail solutions rely on access to your physical mail through the set up of a virtual address for mail intake. Your business goals will determine the type of address to use- PO Box or street address. Keep in mind that the locations and type of business address you choose can form part of your geographic or branding strategy since it can be customer-facing.

2. Security: Some online mail providers rely on partners (such as local mailbox services) for mail intake. Others, like Earth Class Mail, have independent operations. While local partnerships might offer different benefits, service times and security policies will differ greatly depending on the individual provider. A reliable digital mail provider will not only secure their mail physically but also through digital measures like encryption.

3. Volume: For organizations that receive high mail volumes or those with seasonality, like in the tax and accounting industry, the quality of a virtual mail provider's infrastructure is key to expedient and reliable document processing. Research how long their business has been operating and inquire into their technology and service operations.

4. Speed to Information: Whether companies need to get documents signed or a customer payment into the right account, virtual mail solutions reduce transaction times, Recipients don't have to wait for the mailroom to route correspondence, nor do they have to scan it manually. Inquire as to how soon you can access to your information upon being processed in the mail facility.



Moving to Cloud

5. Searchability: Another factor that affects speed to information is whether scans of mail content are formatted for text searchability, a feature that opens up easy record-keeping and referencing. Whether you're looking for a piece of mail from a specific client, needing to identify a line of text in a legal document, or trying to recall an invoice, searchability is paramount. If the solution you are evaluating does not have this feature, weigh that fact against your business goals. To get the most value for your investment, demo their interface to understand the scope of functionalities available.

6. Integrations and Automation: Alongside knowing how quickly you can access mail content and via what format, inventory the actions that can be taken after mail is scanned. Solutions with features like alerts, rules for automating common actions like syncing to cloud storage, and integrations to other business-critical applications can further improve your efficiency. Consolidating actions and processes in one tool reduces the time spent switching between software platforms.

7. Pricing structure: Most mail management solutions will require that you pay to scan your correspondence. But do they charge for mail received? If you're a high-volume user or if you're using an address strictly for business use, inquire about options and pricing for bulk or automatically scanning your contents.

Conclusion

For further considerations on choosing the right digital mail provider, read more on the Earth Class Mail blog. Or, learn how Earth Class Mail has impacted businesses that have chosen our services here.

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