

Document Control: A Critical and Mandatory Requirement of Service & Manufacturing Industry

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Abstract: Document control system plays a vital role in any Industry especially when the procedures have to comply with regulatory and there is a need to control the creation and authentication of documents with proper versioning therefore it is must to have policy for archiving old documents and managing storage, security and safety of the documents to prevent unauthorized access to documents. The recovery mechanism from physical damage or loss of documents should be faster and effective. The industries like insurance and manufacturing units have more dependency on document control system therefore it is must have a suitable document control system which can comply with industry standards and makes job easy.

Keywords: Version control, Document Security, Faster Retrieval, Improving workflow

Introduction: A Document Management System (DMS) used to Control the creation and authentication of documents ,Exercise version control where multiple versions of a document are maintained ,Manage storage of documents in a way that facilitates convenient retrieval of a particular document when needed ,Ensure security and safety of documents with the dual objectives of preventing unauthorized access to documents and allowing recovery from physical damage or loss of documents ,Creates the policy for archiving old documents and disposing them at the end of their life

Applications of Document Control system

1. Convenient Retrieval: Documents are stored with the objective of retrieving them later whenever needed.

These needs can be transactional, research, legal, or similar. Retrieving a particular document from the typically large volume of business documents can be difficult or even impossible unless a sound DMS is in place. Convenient and quick retrieval is a key objective of installing a DMS.

- 2. Version Control:** Where different versions of a document need to be maintained (as in the case of product specifications) it's essential to clearly identify the latest version, including the sequence of all the different versions in existence. A good DMS can eliminate the chaos that can otherwise result when attempting to locate a particular version.
- 3. Improving Workflow:** Business processes typically involve movement of documents from the company to third parties, from department to department inside the company, and from person to person in a department. Several persons with different roles (such as creation, review, approval, and dispatch) will have to reference the document before it completes its intended purpose. Well-planned and efficient movement of documents can significantly speed up business processes and enhance their quality.
- 4. Regulatory Compliance:** The benefit here is one of avoiding trouble, which can be serious enough to shut down the business. Government regulations require maintenance of different kinds of data and documents, and the requirements are often very complex.

A good DMS will help ensure compliance with the rules, using such means as checklists, standard forms, and automatic organization.

5. **Document Security:** Maintaining documents becomes absolutely necessary to meet many different requirements. Documents can contain business secrets and other confidential data, such as product formulas or employees' personal details. If unauthorized persons gain access to these documents, it can lead to business damage or legal damages. A DMS ensures that only authorized persons can access particular documents. Documents also need to be secured from disasters such as fires and floods. A good DMS can make it much easier to restore the documents in case of a disaster
6. **Cost Reduction:** Managing the sizable volume of documents generated in the course of business is expensive. In a paper-based system, paper, ink, file folders, filing cabinets, filing staff, and other requirements cost money. Even in an electronic system, you need computers, storage media, and system-administration staff. Good **document management systems** can reduce these costs by meeting all document-related requirements (outlined above) in a well-planned manner.
7. **Enhanced Competitiveness:** By improving business processes, reducing costs, and preventing serious losses, a DMS can actively contribute to business competitiveness.

How Do Document Management Systems Work?

Document management systems seek to provide the above-mentioned benefits by providing:

1. Clearly identified repositories for all documents:

Paper documents can be stored in filing cabinets located in a central filing section or in departments, while electronic documents can be stored in local desktop computers of each user or within central servers or dedicated storage facilities in a networked system. A good DMS will clearly indicate where a particular document can be found, often times producing the document on demand.

2. A system of classification for all documents:

An easily understood system of sorting documents into different categories can help store paper documents in clearly labelled paper folders and filing cabinets. It can also lead to and help create a hierarchical system of disk directories and a document indexing system. While the directories can facilitate browsing to the desired document quickly, the index can help retrieve documents using a search engine.

3. Rules and templates for creating and authenticating documents:

Rules and permissions specify who can create and authenticate different kinds of documents, and also the procedures to be followed. Templates provide standard formats for the different documents.

4. Tools to specify document workflow to suit business processes:

The DMS will, for example, allow routing particular documents through particular routes, for reviewing, commenting on, and approving the documents. Automated alerts can bring pending documents to the notice of concerned persons.

5. Tools to specify policies and procedures for archiving and disposing documents:

The DMS will allow administrators to specify the policies and procedures for handling old documents. These might be archived in a standard manner if it's likely they will be needed later, or removed if their usefulness has passed.

6. Facilities for quick retrieval of documents:

The information about document repositories and classification systems will be communicated to all concerned persons, and will also be made available for quick reference at filing sections and workstations. This can help those who need particular documents to know where and how to retrieve the document they require. Additionally, search tools can speed up finding electronic documents, including finding all documents related to a particular subject or classification.

7. Security procedures and facilities to prevent unauthorized access and ensure physical safety:

Paper documents will be under the lock and key of specified individuals, who will ensure that only authorized persons are allowed to view the documents. Electronic documents can be protected through a system of access rights and password requirements.

Physical safety is ensured through using security measures, such as fire-alarm systems, barred windows, security cameras, etc. for paper documents, and regular backup/separate storage of the backup for electronic documents.

Advantages of an Electronic Document Management System

While a good document management system can be implemented even if most of the documents are paper based, electronic document management systems have overwhelming advantages. Where the volume of documents is sizable, trying to manage

using paper-based systems can put the business to a severe competitive disadvantage. Response to market conditions, internal business processes, and customer support can be hindered.

The specific advantages of EDMS:

- Document retrieval speeds can be dramatically improved by storing documents on computer disks in a well-organized directory structure with an accompanying search engine
- Document storage costs can be reduced by eliminating the costs of paper, filing cabinets, and dedicated filing-section staff, and by minimizing document storage space
- Workflows can be improved for speed and qualitatively enhanced using unique EDMS facilities
- Security can be enhanced using access rights, passwords, backups, and offsite storage

These advantages can be gained only by selecting the right DMS and implementing it in the right manner.

Implementing an Electronic Document Management System

- 1. Document Creation:** Create documents electronically using computer applications or the DMS itself. Where the computer application is not the DMS, data from the application might need to be imported, or the DMS should be able to access and manage the data. Paper documents can be converted into an electronic form through scanning and OCR processing.
- 2. Collaboration:** Use check-out and check-in procedures to allow multiple users to work on a document without overwriting each other's data. DMS tools also allow documents to be

forwarded to other users to meet workflow requirements.

3. **Document Storage:** Documents are stored on hard disks, tapes, and different kinds of removable media.
4. **Access Rights:** Different users are given different access rights, such as read permission, read and write permission, etc. and might be required to provide passwords to access specified documents.
5. **Document Retrieval:** Organizing documents into well-planned hierarchical directories/databases and facilitating search requirements through tagging, indexing, or full-text recognition are the typical ways document-retrieval speed is increased.
6. **Digital Signatures:** Digital signatures can authenticate documents just like paper documents, eliminating the need to maintain a paper copy in addition to the electronic copy.
7. **Archiving and Removal:** Documents can be tagged with 'Archive by' and 'Remove by' dates, and the system programmed to alert users about these on due dates.

Conclusion

With the Implementation of Document Control System, the companies based on service or manufacturing nature can better manage their documents with unique features like authentication of documents, version control where multiple versions of a document are maintained, Manage storage, Ensure security and safety of documents with the dual objectives of preventing unauthorized access to documents and allowing recovery from physical damage or loss of documents, Creates the policy for archiving old documents and disposing them at the end of their life.

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