

# How to improve your document management system



If the answer to any of these questions is "no," there is a big chance you are having problems with documents. But your case is not unique. Content management continues to be a challenge today for many organizations.



When content chaos gets out-of-hand, many companies end up spending a substantial amount of their budget on fines applied by government agencies, due to lost documents or **non-compliance with deadlines**. These organizations are looking for ways to cut these costs, make their document management processes more transparent and reduce the need for a paper system.

The good news is that implementing changes to improve the way you and your staff organize documents doesn't have to be hard. This eBook offers some easy-to-implement strategies that can help you cut costs and maximize the full potential of your document management process.



# 01 | Turn Paper Into Electronic Information

The first piece of advice to improve document management is: **Scan paper documents and turn them into electronic information (e.g., PDF).** This is a straightforward way to begin to eliminate the burden of paper.

In today's competitive marketplace, organizations that continue to run their business on paper will suffer to manage the related costs. The lack of efficiency will certainly be an opportunity for the competition. Not to mention that finding paper documents is time-consuming.

Electronic information can be retrieved faster and becomes easy to manage, track and reuse. In addition, this also reduces or even eliminates the handling of paper and paper-intensive operations.

The screenshot displays a software interface with two main components. On the left is a 'Purchase Order' form titled 'PO40669 - Purchase Order Lang Sterling Pie Server'. It includes fields for 'PO#', 'Sales Representative', 'Customer Name', 'Customer Last Name', 'Customer Address', 'City', 'State', and 'Country'. On the right is a 'PDF Viewer' window showing a document from 'Northwest Products'. The document includes a logo, company name, address, and shipping information. A table at the bottom of the PDF lists items with quantities, item numbers, descriptions, unit prices, and amounts.

Quantity	Item #	Description	Unit Price	Amount
1	638	LANG STERLING PIE SERVER	34.95	34.95

## 02 | Centralize Enterprise Content

The second piece of advice is to establish a repository to centralize all enterprise content.

It is commonplace at large companies for each department or business unit to work with several kinds of documents and apply different methods for managing them. This tends to promote redundancy in creation and distribution activities. Enterprise Document Management Software consolidates these efforts.

**Quick access to information increases efficiency when responding to business requests.** The ability to quickly access information also improves decision-making processes.

By centralizing information, employees can find important documents with ease, retrieving them whenever necessary.

The screenshot displays the SoftExpert QView Document (DC021) interface. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Portals, My tasks, Components, and Shortcuts. A search bar is located on the right. The left sidebar contains search filters, saved searches (My documents, Favorites, Documents close to due date), and a type filter (QCPPW-Quality Care Pharmacy Program). The main area shows a table of search results for 'quality manual'.

	F	SD	EF	DS	Category	ID #	Title	Revision	Date	Hits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	★	↺	📄		MAN	QM-000001	Quality Manual - Standard Template	00	3/08/2010	16
<input type="checkbox"/>	★	↺	📄		MAN	MN000005	Quality Manual - Ames Research Center	00	3/22/2010	0
<input type="checkbox"/>	★	↺	📄		MAN	MN000007	Quality Management System	00	3/22/2010	5

Total records: 16

The bottom section shows a preview of the 'Quality Management System Manual.pdf'. The document title is 'Quality Manual' and 'ISO 9001 Quality Management System'. The content includes sections for '5 Leadership & Governance', '5.1 Leadership and Commitment', and '5.1.1 Quality Management'. A diagram titled 'Figure 3: Leadership PDCA Cycle' is visible, showing a cycle with 'Plan' (Establish organizational context and strategies) and 'Do' (Develop the system) stages.

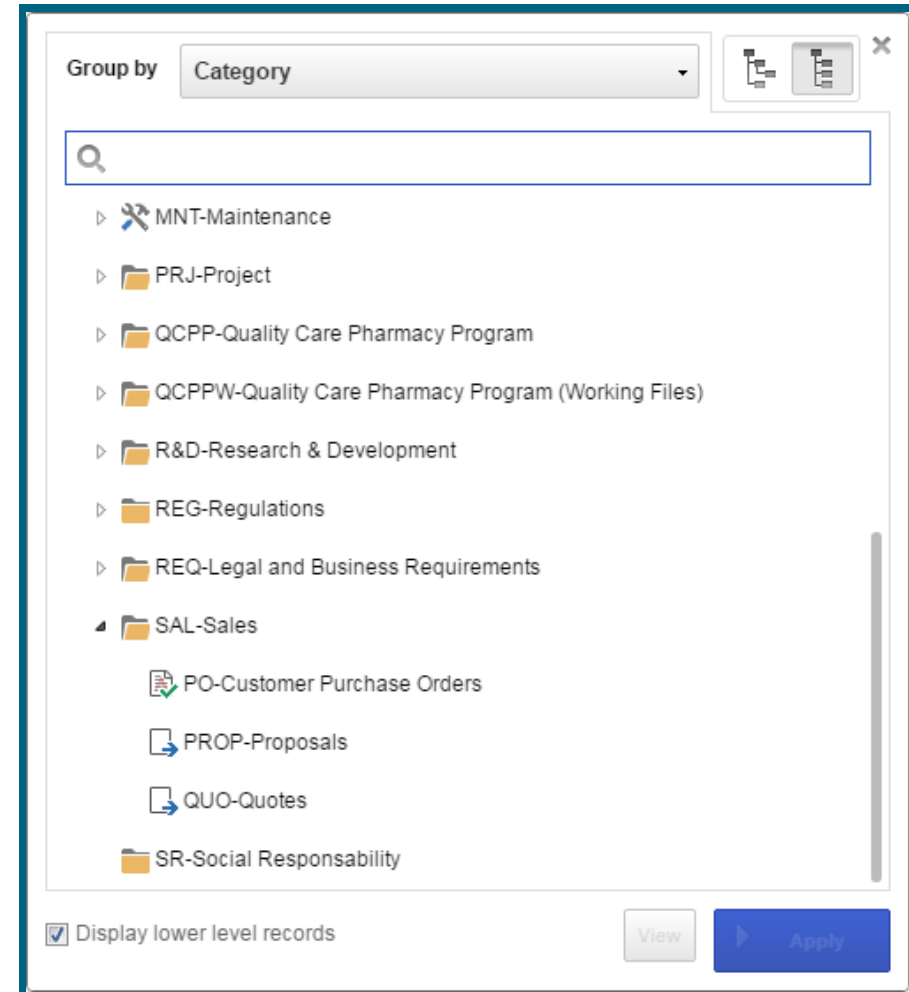
## 03 | Classify Information

Organizations create vast amounts of documents to conduct and keep track of business. In order to make content navigation and search capabilities easy to use, you need to categorize your documents, developing what is known as **Taxonomy**.

In a sales process for example, there are several related documents, such as:

- Pricing sheets
- Proposals
- Contracts

When identifying and analyzing the company's processes, you will understand the anatomical structure of the business, and will have the foundation of your taxonomy.



# 04 | Make Good Use of Metadata

Accessibility is the most important aspect of document management, and Metadata can help you to manage unstructured enterprise information, allowing users to find the information they need easily and quickly.

Metadata should be defined by the context of the business. For invoices, you can use attributes such as Vendor Name, Date and Invoice Value. For human resources records, Employee Name, National ID and Passport Number are more appropriate attributes.

**Metadata combined with taxonomy means documents can be found with greater ease.** Identifying a document can be much more simple, since you don't need to open it. If you need to apply retention policies, well-defined metadata makes the process more consistent and faster.

The screenshot shows a software window with a title bar and standard OS controls. Inside, there are input fields for 'ID #' (containing 'HR') and 'Name' (containing 'Human Resources'). Below these are tabs for 'General', 'Attribute', 'Control', and 'Details', with 'Attribute' currently selected. A table lists attributes with columns for 'Seq.', 'Attribute', 'Default value', 'R', and 'B'. The first row is highlighted in yellow and has its 'Seq.' checkbox checked. To the right of the table is a vertical toolbar with icons for adding, deleting, and refreshing records. At the bottom right, it says 'Total records (3)'. The footer contains fields for 'Created on', 'Last updated' (4/17/2017), and 'Updated by' (Tetsuo Kendo).

Seq.	Attribute	Default value	R	B
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1	Employee Name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	National ID	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Passport Number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# 05 | Save time with Templates

Document templates are an easier way to add content to a repository.

Office tools such as Word or Excel allow you to establish document templates, where you can standardize many different elements, like headers and footers, images, tables, formulas, and more.

**This resource will allow you to create professional documents, aligned with your standards and corporate policies.**

As result, you can standardize layouts, accelerate the drafting process and improve the consistency of information.

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Docview - 4.7.1". The interface includes a toolbar with icons for "Save as...", "Send by mail", "Zoom -", "Zoom +", "One Page", "Two Pages", "Fit to page", and "Search". Below the toolbar is a horizontal ruler. The main content area displays a contract template for "Retail Products". The template includes a header with the company logo and name, followed by the title "FORM OF SUPPLY CONTRACT AGREEMENT". A table lists contract details: Code (TEM000001), Revision (04), Responsible (Carl Jordan - Project Manager), Released Date (2/23/2009), and Pages (1 of 4). Below the table, the text "CONTRACT AGREEMENT" is centered, followed by fields for "Contract Number: -" and "Contract Manager: -". The main body of the contract begins with "THIS AGREEMENT, made as of is" and "BY AND BETWEEN". It then identifies the "CUSTOMER" as "{-, -}" and the "SUPPLIER" as "Retail Products Inc. 64 Kennedy Av., Chicago / Illinois / 60662.". The section "CONTRACT ABSTRACT:" is followed by a hyphen "-".

Code	Revision	Responsible	Released Date	Pages
TEM000001	04	Carl Jordan - Project Manager	2/23/2009	1 of 4

**CONTRACT AGREEMENT**

Contract Number: -  
Contract Manager: -

THIS AGREEMENT, made as of is

BY AND BETWEEN

the CUSTOMER: {-, -}.

And the SUPPLIER: Retail Products Inc. 64 Kennedy Av., Chicago / Illinois / 60662.

CONTRACT ABSTRACT:

-



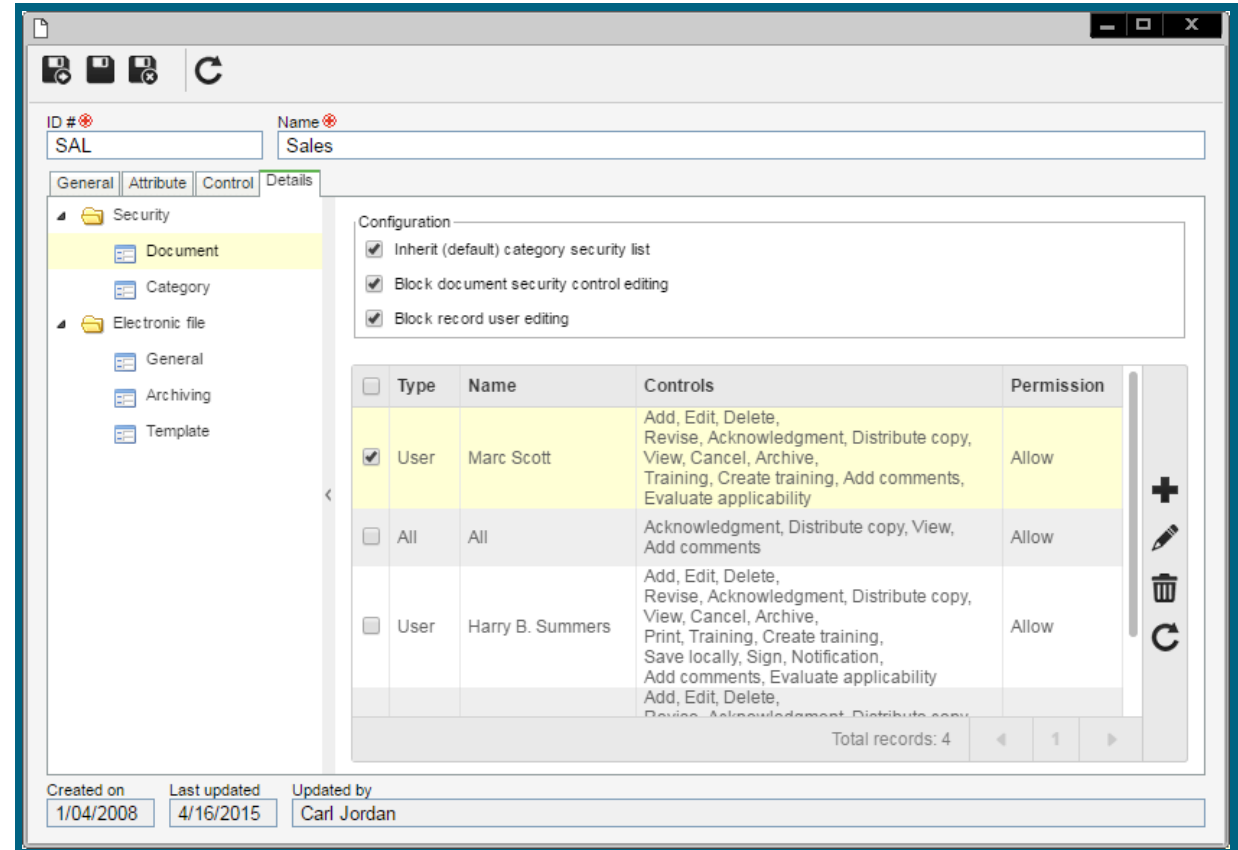
# 06 | Establish Security Controls

A lack of content control and management of content leaves organizations increasingly exposed to security risks.

Not all employees need full access to all of the organization's documents. **By establishing adequate access controls, content is made safer and information is prevented from being maliciously or accidentally changed or deleted.**

Some documents may need to be edited by staff members, but others should be listed as read-only. With permissions controls, no one can change what you've classified as finalized.

You can set permissions logically and adjust them as needed to accommodate your team's access needs.



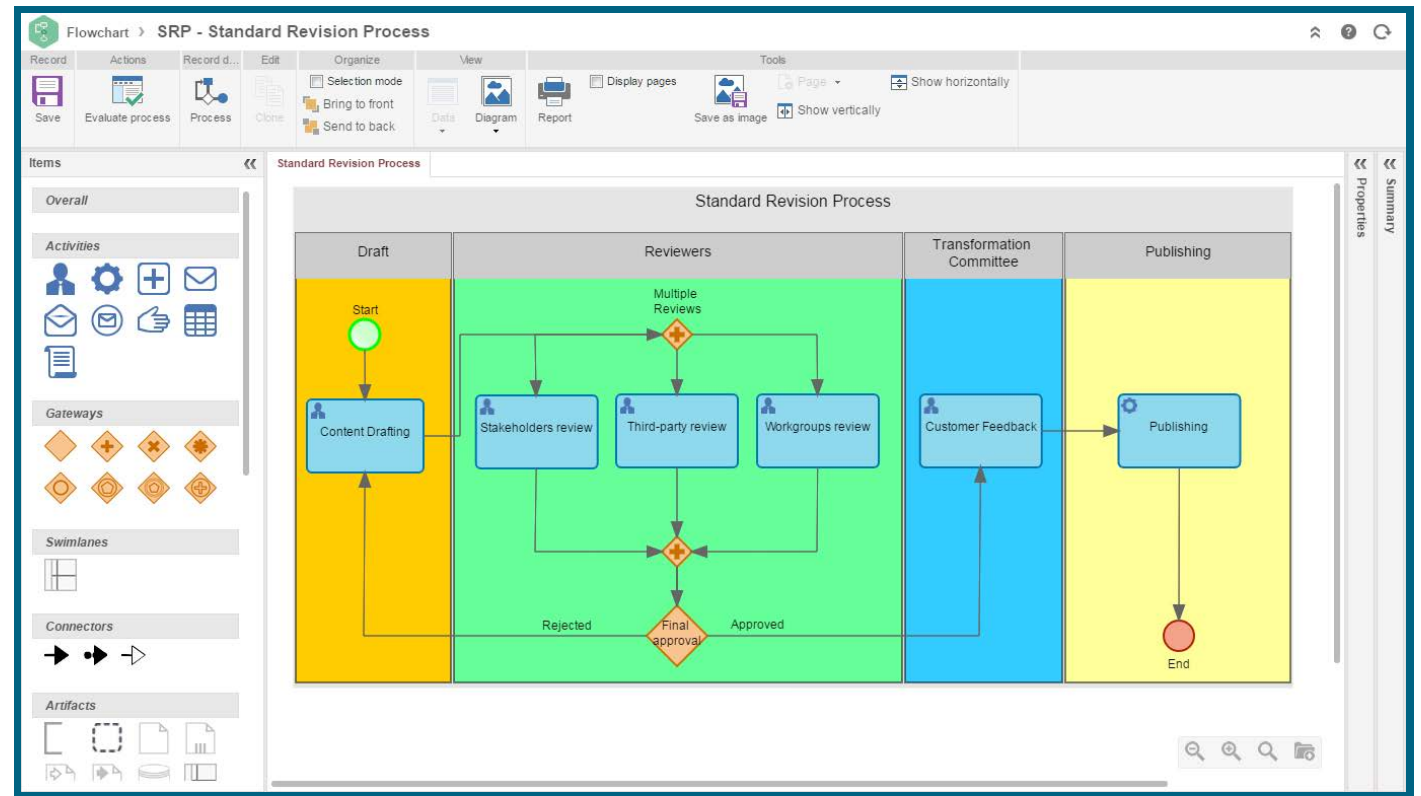
# 07 | Encourage Collaboration

**How often do people at your company send emails asking teammates to change a document or to request approval for an attached document?**

This practice is slow and costly, compromising productivity.

Start using the system as a place to centralize these activities. Naturally employees and teammates will begin to communicate through this channel without using email and outside applications.

An Enterprise Solution enables users across every department, from marketing and sales to products and engineering, to work together on the same document, easily and efficiently.



# 08 | Manage Document Versioning

Enterprise documents can change at any time.

What would happen if:

- Each of your company's sellers is working with a different price list?
- Some were using outdated contract templates?

Certainly this would result in hassles for you and your customers.

To prevent this kind of trouble, you can standardize a process for managing document versions. **The management of versions gives you the possibility of flexibly implementing Document changes or improvements to meet legal or regulatory requirements or new business needs.**

An Enterprise Content solution helps you to implement document changes and maintain the history of older versions. It also provides notifications and ensures that everyone is accessing the most up-to-date version of the document.

The screenshot displays the SoftExpert QView Document (DC021) interface. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Portals, My tasks, Components, and Shortcuts. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a main table.

**Left Sidebar:**

- Search filters:** A search bar containing "tem000001".
- Saved searches:** A list of saved searches including "My documents", "Favorites", and "Documents close to due date".
- Type:** A section with a "Select type" button and a "Display attributes" checkbox.
- Advanced filters:** A section with a "Save" button and a "SEARCH" button.

**Main Table:**

The main table displays a list of documents. The columns are: F, SD, EF, DS, Category, ID #, Title, Revision, Date, and Hits. The table shows two records:

F	SD	EF	DS	Category	ID #	Title	Revision	Date	Hits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	04	2/23/2009	4
<input type="checkbox"/>				TEM	TEM000002	Contract Agreement Template	01	2/23/2009	15

Below the main table, there is a "Display" dropdown set to "Revision". This section shows a detailed view of the document versions. The columns are: RS, Category, ID #, Title, Revision, Date, User ID, Name, Department, and Position. The table shows six records:

RS	Category	ID #	Title	Revision	Date	User ID	Name	Department	Position
	TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	05		john	John Smith	QA - Quality Assurance	Manager - Mana
	TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	04	2/23/2009	carl.jordan	Carl Jordan	IT - Information Technology	Project Manager
	TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	03	2/23/2009	carl.jordan	Carl Jordan	IT - Information Technology	Project Manager
	TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	02	2/22/2009	carl.jordan	Carl Jordan	IT - Information Technology	Project Manager
	TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	01	2/22/2009	james.tooby	James J. Tooby	Purchase - Purchase	Manager - Mana
	TEM	TEM000001	Retail Supply Contract Agreement	00	3/01/2008	carl.jordan	Carl Jordan	IT - Information Technology	Project Manager

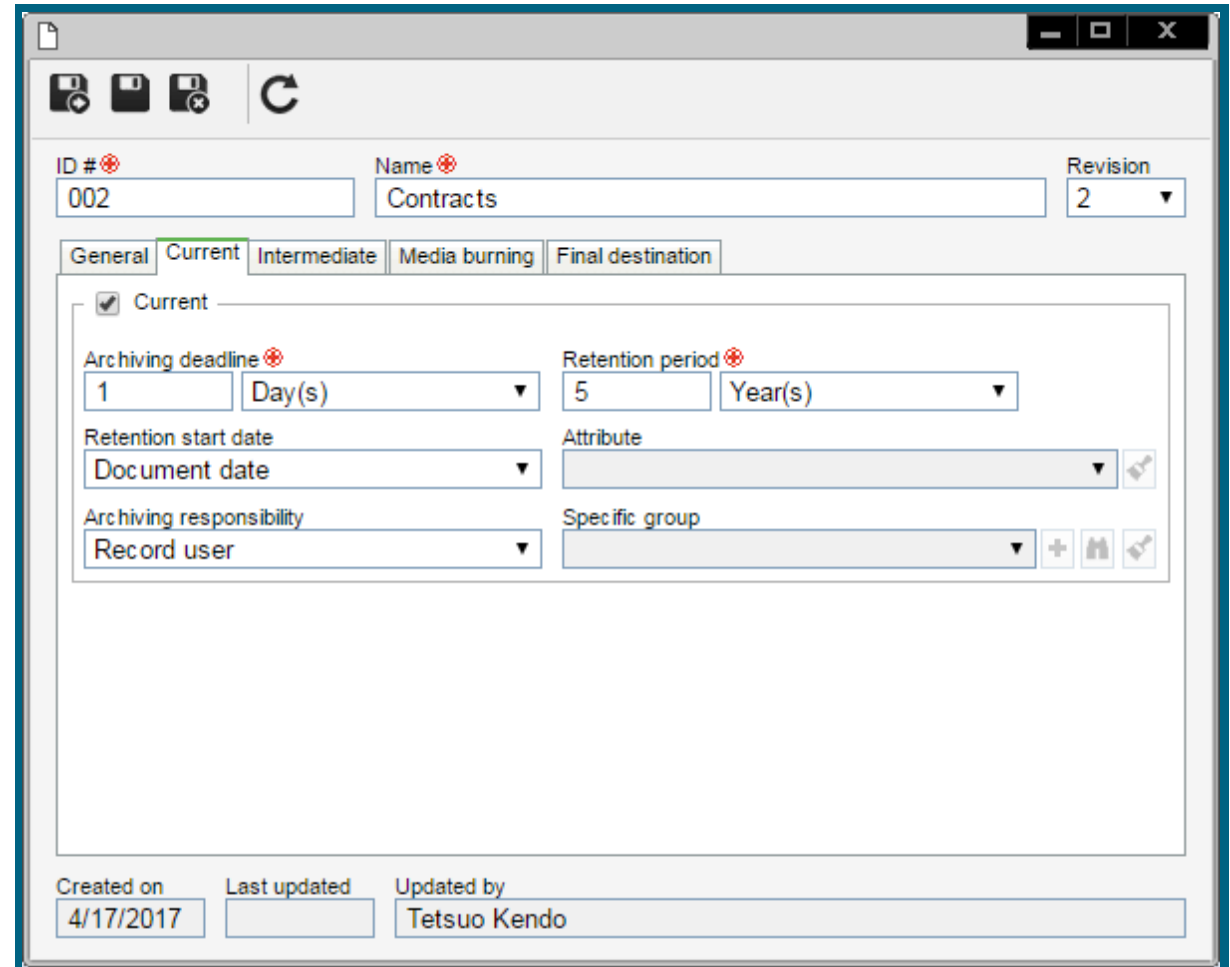
The bottom of the interface shows a "Total records: 6" and navigation controls.

# 09 | Apply Retention Rules

**Have you ever stopped to think that you may be storing documents that you no longer have any use for?**

Each enterprise document usually has a lifetime, defined by local compliance requirements or by policies that the organization itself establishes.

Both physical and electronic documents require storage space. To prevent unnecessary costs, you need to establish policies to discard content at the end of its lifecycle.



The screenshot shows a software window for configuring document retention rules. At the top, there are icons for saving, deleting, and refreshing. Below these are fields for 'ID #', 'Name', and 'Revision'. The 'ID #' field contains '002', 'Name' contains 'Contracts', and 'Revision' is a dropdown set to '2'. Below these fields are five tabs: 'General', 'Current', 'Intermediate', 'Media burning', and 'Final destination'. The 'Current' tab is selected and contains a checked checkbox labeled 'Current'. Below this checkbox are several fields: 'Archiving deadline' (set to '1' with a 'Day(s)' dropdown), 'Retention period' (set to '5' with a 'Year(s)' dropdown), 'Retention start date' (set to 'Document date'), 'Archiving responsibility' (set to 'Record user'), 'Attribute' (a dropdown menu), and 'Specific group' (a dropdown menu with '+' and '-' icons). At the bottom of the window, there are three fields: 'Created on' (set to '4/17/2017'), 'Last updated' (empty), and 'Updated by' (set to 'Tetsuo Kendo').

ID #	Name	Revision
002	Contracts	2

General | **Current** | Intermediate | Media burning | Final destination

☒ Current

Archiving deadline: 1 Day(s) | Retention period: 5 Year(s)

Retention start date: Document date | Attribute: [Dropdown]

Archiving responsibility: Record user | Specific group: [Dropdown]

Created on: 4/17/2017 | Last updated: [Empty] | Updated by: Tetsuo Kendo

# 10 | Implement an Audit Trail

The last strategy to improve your company's document management system is to implement an audit trail.

This resource lets you know everything that happens with a document, showing 'who is doing what and when.'

With an audit trail, you can identify weaknesses in your process and continue to make improvements to the system.

**Ensuring that your own system is compliant makes it much easier to maintain compliance with industry standards and regulations as well.**

Soft Expert

Home

Portals

My tasks

Components

Shortcuts

View

System auditing (DC027)

Search filters

Details

H	Date	Time	Category	ID #	Title	Revision	User	Host	IP	Department
18/05/2015	14:35:34	MAN	MN000004	Quality Manual - TT Electronics	00	Robert Smith	192.168.6.66	192.168.6.66	PMO	
20/05/2015	14:03:56	MAN	MN000001	Quality Manual		Smith	192.168.6.66	192.168.6.66	PMO	
22/05/2015	17:34:13	CAD	CAD001A3	Floor Plans		Gendo	192.168.1.28	192.168.1.28	Information Technology	
26/05/2015	15:58:16	CAD	CPR005A3	Foundation Plan		Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
26/05/2015	15:59:42	E	E000001	QCPP REQUIRED		Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
26/05/2015	16:05:48	CAD	CPR004A3	Exterior Details		Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
26/05/2015	16:06:24	CAD	CPR005A3	Foundation Plan		Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
27/05/2015	09:42:57	MKT-PPT	MKT-PPT000002	EnMS Policy		Smith	172.16.31.255	172.16.31.255	PMO	
27/05/2015	09:42:57	MKT-PPT	MKT-PPT000002	EnMS Policy		Smith	172.16.31.255	172.16.31.255	PMO	
27/05/2015	09:42:57	MKT-PPT	MKT-PPT000002	EnMS Policy		Smith	172.16.31.255	172.16.31.255	PMO	
27/05/2015	09:43:46	MKT-PPT	MKT-PPT000002	EnMS Policy		Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
27/05/2015	09:48:30	CAD	CAD001A4	8-DIRECTION MILL		Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
27/05/2015	09:48:57	CAD	CAD001A4	8-DIRECTION MILL Assembled Model	00	Robert Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	
27/05/2015	10:34:00	UP	UP000002	Documents	00	Robert Smith	192.168.1.6	192.168.1.6	PMO	

Legend - Google Chrome

H = History

Registered document

Deleted document

Canceled document

Released document

Registered revision

Deleted revision

Closed revision

View document

Add electronic file

Delete electronic file

Printed controlled copy

Printed uncontrolled copy

Quantity of scheduled copies was modified

Registered archiving

Canceled archiving

Digital signature

Total records: 7902

1156157158159

Now that you already know **How to improve your company's document management system**, learn more about **SoftExpert ECM** (Enterprise Content Management), the most complete and innovative solution on the market for process automation and improvement, regulatory compliance and excellence in content management.

## SoftExpert ECM

SoftExpert ECM is a robust platform that provides all of the core content management services needed to create, capture, manage, store, preserve, and deliver content related to organizational processes. It is a practical software solution for centralizing unstructured content and better managing the entire content lifecycle.

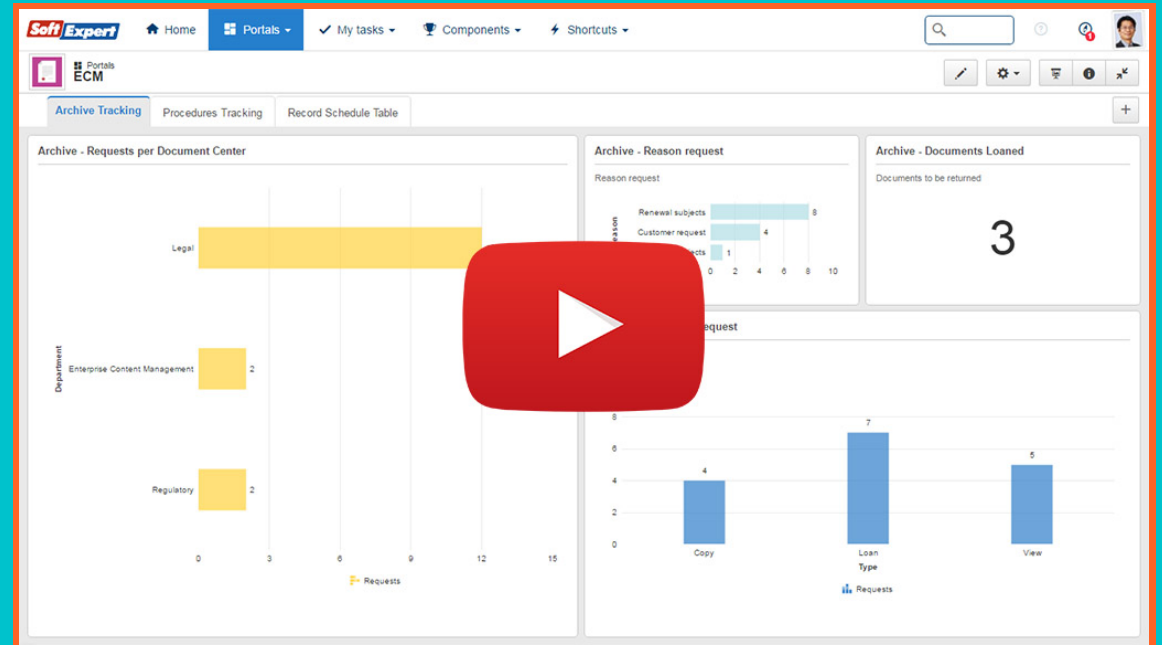
The solution provides a single and integrated environment, including capabilities to capture, document and record management, workflows, search and archiving as well as applications, such as contract management and engineering document management system (EDMS).



Automating your document management system is a key ingredient to boosting performance and productivity rates at your business and avoiding mistakes and re-work.

SoftExpert ECM provides all of the support needed to achieve the results you are looking for.

**Learn more about the solution:**



## SoftExpert Excellence Suite



SoftExpert Excellence Suite is the most comprehensive framework of independent yet united solutions to achieve business performance excellence, streamline corporate governance, risk and compliance programs, and ensure continuous business process improvement.

Companies may not need all applications at once, or may want to deploy one application module at a time, growing gradually as the need arises. Whatever the strategy chosen, only a fully shared environment allows its applications to fit together like puzzle pieces and work seamlessly.

## About SoftExpert

SoftExpert is a market leader in software and services for enterprise-wide business process improvement and compliance management, providing the most comprehensive application suite to empower organizations to increase business performance at all levels and to maximize industry-mandated compliance and corporate governance programs.

Founded in 1995 and currently with more than 2,000 customers and 300,000 users worldwide, SoftExpert solutions are used by leading corporations in all kinds of industries, including manufacturing, automotive, life sciences, food and beverage, mining and metals, oil and gas, high-tech and IT, energy and utilities, government and public sector, financial services, transportation and logistics, healthcare, and many others.

SoftExpert, along with its extensive network of international partners, provides hosting, implementation, post-sales support and validation services for all solutions to ensure that customers get the maximum value from their investments.





*Software for Performance Excellence*

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