

**CUSTOMER:**

Comet Industries

WEBSITE:

www.cometind.com

INDUSTRY:

Transportation

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

Comet Industries provides products and services to the rail industry, including communications technology, field installation and maintenance services, and parts for rail cars. The company is based in Kansas City, Missouri.

PARTNER:

KnowledgeLake

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KnowledgeLake develops document imaging, document capture, and workflow products and solutions for Microsoft SharePoint. KnowledgeLake extends the Electronic Content Management (ECM) capabilities of SharePoint, enabling businesses to reduce mailing costs, streamline operations, and achieve regulatory compliance using familiar Microsoft products.

SOFTWARE & SERVICES:

| KnowledgeLake Imaging

| KnowledgeLake Capture

| Microsoft SharePoint 2010

Customer Solution Case Study

RAIL SERVICES FIRM PUTS DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT ON FAST TRACK WITH KNOWLEDGE LAKE ECM SOLUTION

Comet Industries provides products and services for the rail industry, including communications equipment and parts for rail cars. To streamline its operations, the company deployed a KnowledgeLake ECM solution on Microsoft SharePoint and Microsoft Dynamics GP software. The result is easier employee access to documents, less paper cluttering up office space, and improved core business processes.

Business Needs

Comet Industries started business in the early 1960s to help install and service the microwave communications network used by the Kansas City Southern Railroad. Since that time nearly 50 years ago, Comet has grown to include three business units: Comet Communications and Signal, which continues to provide railroad and communications systems maintenance in the Midwest; Comet Rail Products, which provides new and reconditioned parts for railroad cars; and Comet Electronics, which provides

solutions ranging from AEI equipment to the installation and maintenance of complete signal and communications systems for regional rail companies.

In 2010, Comet deployed

a Microsoft SharePoint intranet to streamline its business processes. SharePoint was installed alongside the company's existing Microsoft Dynamics GP enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

While the move to SharePoint was an important step, the company was still wrestling with how to manage the carloads of invoices, reports, specifications, and other documents used to run the business.

"Like most companies, we were dealing with a lot of paper," says David Nelson, Director of IT for Comet. "It slowed the search and retrieval of business information. We were spending an inordinate amount of time just gathering and looking up paper files to put information into the ERP system. We wanted to find a Microsoft-based product that would help us with our document management needs and would cut time and costs by integrating easily with our other enterprise software, including SharePoint and Dynamics GP."

"With the KnowledgeLake software, it's commonplace to hear employees say, for example, that they can find an invoice in a minute or two, whereas in the past it might have taken them an hour to find the physical document in a filing cabinet."

David Nelson, Director of IT
Comet Industries



Solution

Comet decided to install a KnowledgeLake enterprise content management (ECM) solution.

"We considered some alternatives, including solutions from DocuWare and FileHold, but they did not include the kind of functionality and integration with our ERP systems that we were looking for," says Nelson. "They would have required backend custom integration, whereas KnowledgeLake fit the vision we had for an ECM solution."

Comet installed KnowledgeLake Imaging for SharePoint, which provides tools for searching, viewing, and annotating documents. They also deployed KnowledgeLake Capture, which is used with scanning hardware to capture and digitize documents. The company is using Capture with Fujitsu fi-6130 duplex-capable color workgroup scanners and Canon P-150 portable scanners, which are used by field personnel for scanning documents.

The company made the solution available to employees in the receiving, invoicing, and accounts payable departments. "The deployment went smoothly," says Nelson. "Our users were already familiar with Microsoft Office and the SharePoint interface, and the familiar interface of the KnowledgeLake products, which closely resembles other Microsoft software, made training pretty easy."

Benefits

With the KnowledgeLake ECM solution running with SharePoint and Microsoft Dynamics GP, Comet employees spend less time than in the past handling paper files. They can find information faster and the company is able to streamline core business processes with digitized documents.

Gradually Going Paperless

Nelson says that with the KnowledgeLake ECM solution in place, employees are spending far less time physically handling and filing paper documents. "The KnowledgeLake solution has made a big dent in the amount of paper files that are being handled and that used to clutter up our desks," he says. "My desk now looks empty without all of those paper files cluttering it up, yet I can access the documents I need quickly and easily on the SharePoint file repository."

Speeds Document Retrieval

The ease and speed in which employees can access documents on the intranet helps them work faster and more efficiently. "Our initial intent when beginning this project was to find a solution to provide our users with tools that could help them spend less time looking for the information they needed and more time on their daily processes. That's what KnowledgeLake has delivered," says Nelson. "With the KnowledgeLake software, it's commonplace to hear employees say, for example, that they can find an invoice in a minute or two, whereas in the past it might have taken them an hour to find the physical document in a filing cabinet."

Changes Key Business Processes

Nelson says that with technology like KnowledgeLake and SharePoint available, it's surprising that many businesses still rely on stacks of paper filed in cabinets. "This is particularly important with key business processes and disaster recovery," says Nelson. "With our ECM solution, we know that even if our headquarters building were to burn down, all of our files are safely stored in digital form at a different site. It helps the daily operations of the business while giving us a degree of continuity and safety that we did not have in the past."