Process Improvements

In 2011 my employer lost a legal case based on a simple reason: the documents were not date stamped. I remembered a couple years before dropping off paperwork and the office had a machine that my packet had gone on to, zipped through and out of curiosity I asked the clerk what the machine was. It was a date stamper, so I suggested we procure the same type of machine. Since it was my idea management agreed happily and asked me to do the research on machines, features and costs. I came back with a simple machine that would print a short line of text and the current or a programmed date. Exactly what we needed.

A process was developed so that everyone knew how to use the machine correctly and for several years and several hundred thousand pages the machine worked perfectly. Basic maintenance kept it going until it needed a full refurbish. I again sought permission for sending the machine for repair after finding out timelines and costs. Meanwhile we had to keep up with the date stamping some other way. I tried a funky trick with Word and footers that was bad and finally settled on using Adobe Pro. I had one of the very few copies of Adobe everyone else had Adobe Reader at the time. After a few minutes of exploring the options (I'd only had the software for a few days at the time) I found a way to add footers to all the pages of a document quickly, then I found the Workflows and automated it. Finally I presented my solution to management who again enthusiastically gave the green light to use the tricks I'd learned.

It wasn't long until everyone else received an upgrade to Adobe DC, an enterprise edition of Adobe that has all the bells and whistles. I exported my workflow, sent it around to the team and now everyone can use either the machine which is up and running smoothly or they can use the Adobe Workflow.

The next major process improvement was for only part of the team and a specific project but it saves a lot of time. The basics of the process is to compare 2 or sometimes more documents for differences. This was being done manually, on paper and was taking a very long time when the project was on a very tight deadline.

Not long after this portion of the project was getting underway Adobe DC received an update with some new features. Being the sort who likes to know what software does I'd played with the feature of comparing documents, thought it was cool and filed the idea away in memory.

While chatting with my new officemate I found out what exactly she was doing, manually comparing documents so I described the new tool, showed it off briefly as it was late on a Friday, and left for home. Much to everyone's delight the new tool was adopted Monday morning and has saved the team roughly 88% of their time on that not so small portion of the project.

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