Success Story

Third Time Is A Charm?
Knoxville Insurance Agency Finds Success With Its 3rd Document Management System

"It was the most amazing, creative use of time I have ever been involved in."

Client: TIS Insurance Services, Inc.

Industry: Insurance Agency

Client Profile
Founded: 1945
Employees: 110
Offices: Knoxville TN; Atlanta GA; Macon GA
Annual Premium Volume: $150 million
Specialties: Construction, Health Care Services
Agency Management System: AMS for Windows®

Business Challenges
TIS Insurance Services' version of the CBD-Docs™ document management system was outdated, and did not allow for customization without involving the vendor. Filing and retrieval of documents was extremely slow and inefficient. Searching for documents was nearly impossible without a great deal of manual labor. Workflows were confusing for staff members, as they often involved complicated workarounds. As a result, quality control suffered, and many documents were misfiled.

Solution
The July, 2006 implementation of the AccuraImage™ document management solution from Lumtron Technologies, Inc.

Benefits
Immediate access to files and documents; dramatically simpler workflows; higher quality control; greater software flexibility; enhanced regulatory compliance, increased employee morale.

Overview

Founded in 1945 by Norman Thomas and L.F. Hurley, TIS Insurance Services, Inc. is one of the largest and most well-known insurance agencies in the Knoxville area. From its humble beginnings 60+ years ago with only 3 employees, TIS now employs a staff of 110 in Knoxville, Atlanta, and Macon GA. TIS Insurance writes over $150 million in premium in 48 states – primarily in the areas of construction and health care services. TIS Insurance utilizes AMS for Windows® (AfW) as its primary client and policy administration system.

TIS Insurance was no stranger to document management, though. Having implemented two document management systems already (Image Edition™ from LCS in 1999, and CBD-Docs™ from Computers by Design in 2002) the agency's technology and efficiency requirements kept outgrowing and outpacing the abilities of these older systems. The agency's management finally found a solution that was flexible enough to grow with the agency in the AccuraImage document management solution from Lumtron Technologies, Inc. Since implementing the new document management system (DMS) in July of 2006, the agency has enjoyed the benefits of faster access to client files, enhanced regulatory compliance, dramatically simpler workflows, increased employee morale, greater quality control and far greater software flexibility.

The Challenges

In 2005, TIS realized that it had a problem – again. Having outgrown LCS Image Edition™ after only 3 years, the agency found itself in a similar situation just 3 more years later. Due to the outdated Lotus Notes® platform of the agency's existing DMS, integration with their SQL®-based AMS for Windows (AfW) client & policy management system was

problematic, and difficulties in retrieving client-related documents were interfering with TIS' otherwise stellar customer service. According to Marsha Peters, Chief Operating Officer for TIS, "Document retrieval had become painfully slow, primarily because our existing CBD-Docs™ platform could not handle the volume." She continues, "The workflow was not smooth and in some cases required complicated workarounds that were confusing for most of the staff. Searching for documents and querying the database for quality control was virtually impossible without a great deal of manual labor. As a result, quality control suffered and documents were misnamed and misfiled." Customizing the DMS to alleviate these problems, though, was out of

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the question. As Peters explains, "anything we wanted to change had to be handled by the software company. Having to call on every change or problem was cumbersome—there appeared to be only one developer who knew how the program worked."

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The Search Process

TIS Insurance first defined the features and functionality that were required in a new DMS. Because of the agency's heavy reliance on its AfW system for all day-to-day client and policy administration activities, a seamless integration between the two products was a must – and the DMS needed to be Microsoft SQL®-based in order to facilitate this integration. It must also be compatible with Citrix®, as TIS relies heavily on this tool for I.T. administration. On the other hand, the two systems could not be inseparably tied together; the agency employees would need the ability to easily access documents if the AfW system were down or unavailable for any reason, or to manage documents that would not be linked to the AfW system at all (i.e., payroll, human resources, etc.). Employee workflows must be simpler, and the DMS must be easily customizable to accommodate the agency's desired processes – which differed from department to department. Documents and electronic files needed to be stored in their native formats. Lastly, the chosen solution had to possess powerful search capabilities, allow for

thorough reporting, and provide fast and efficient document retrieval.

Dan Steely, TIS Insurance's I.T. Director, first reviewed document systems at a regional AMS User Group meeting in January, 2006. After that, the agency began gathering information on the most promising candidates, and scheduled web demos. "When Dan and I sat in on the AccuraImage™ demo, we actually stopped it when we were only half way through," explains Peters. "It took less than an hour for us to know that we needed to bring Lumtron in for a full demo with all of our managers."

Lumtron President Dan DeSerto and Vice President Paul Fotis went to Knoxville on February 16, 2006 for the presentation to TIS management. "The entire process went very smoothly. Being a sales organization, our staff tends to be immune to the normal sales techniques – but working with Lumtron was a very forthright experience."

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The Decision

"When everything was said and done," explains Peters, "there was not much of a decision to be made. Absolutely, AccuraImage™ was far and away the best system we had seen – its speed, integration, flexibility, and customization were so far beyond what we had been using – but what really sold us was Lumtron as a company." She continues, "Any questions we had were addressed in a very thorough way with technical explanations. All of our concerns were given consideration and addressed. Never once did Lumtron try to avoid a question, sugar-coat an answer, or change the subject. It was all very refreshing."

The Implementation Process

"The implementation process was amazing," Peters comments. "During the initial business analysis, I misunderstood the relationship between two areas of the software. I had discussed with each of our divisions how *I thought* they were going to work. However, AccuraImage™ did not normally do what I thought that I understood and what I had indicated to the staff. UhOh! I had put words into Lumtron's mouth and had created expectations in the staff that were not part of the program." Continuing, Peters states, "Most software companies would have just explained that what I wanted was not possible – 'sorry but you've signed the contract, etc'. Lumtron, however, got their heads together and started looking for solutions. The software engineers found a way to supply the degree of customization that I had assumed, and in a way that I could manage, add to and change."

Peters goes on to explain how impressed the agency was with Lumtron's flexibility and willingness to do whatever it took to ensure the success of TIS' implementation. "There was some confusion about when we wanted to implement the program – we had one idea about when we wanted to go live, and Lumtron had a slightly different idea." She continues, "However, Dan DeSerto and Paul Fotis made special arrangements to get us up and going within our timeframe. They were both on site for the

installation, and customization was awesome. As we met with [each of our] divisions, the software was changed to accommodate what each division needed. The synergy was tremendous."

"Paul Fotis was great with the staff during the training process. Once he explained how the program worked, the creative juices started to flow with the staff." Continuing, she explains, "Even during the training sessions, we were raising 'what if?' questions. We certainly did not provide Lumtron with a normal training environment! But every step of the way, they stepped in and helped determine what would work, and what the tradeoffs would be to some of the changes we were requesting. Even while training was going on, Dan DeSerto was on the phone with his development staff making changes and creating new and better ways to handle our business. They took suggestions and questions and turned them into results. It was the most amazing, creative use of time I have ever been involved in."

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AccuraImage™

Life After Implementation

It was clear that TIS Insurance was pleased with Lumtron's staff, their flexibility, and their dedication. But was the software everything that was expected? Has the agency seen any resolution to the issues they previously faced? Peters immediately responds, "The speed has changed everyone's life. Getting things into AccuraImage™ is much simpler and straightforward than before. By having the integration automatically generate the necessary indexing, typos don't sabotage our files like they used to. The quality of the information in our electronic files has improved greatly." Peters goes on, "AccuraImage™ is faster, more intuitive, and simpler all around." To illustrate, Peters uses a 'before and after' workflow example of bringing emails into the DMS. "With our old system, macros had to be loaded to all Microsoft Office® suite products. There were occasional complications. Electronic items could not be directly imported into CBD-Docs™; rather, they needed to be first saved to the network using the File/Save as method from the Office® Suite products. Only one email could be saved at the time. As a workaround, several emails pertaining to the same topic would be pulled into an email or journal and saved as one entity – but then these large emails caused numerous problems with retrieval." Peters contrasts that with how the same workflow is handled today, "Now, emails and documents are simply dragged and dropped into AccuraImage™, and the integration automatically completes the indexing. Once the integration takes place, the user can just change the description for each document and save it without having to 're-integrate' each item."

In the six months following their July 2006 implementation, TIS staff members have scanned over 78,000 documents into AccuraImage™, and have electronically imported tens of thousands more. "We are pre-processing some documents and post-processing others. All large commercial policies, audits, endorsements, etc. that come into the agency are scanned into AccuraImage™ and then routed to the appropriate personnel. This allows immediate access of everything coming into the office regardless of when it actually gets processed, and safeguards against losing items. In addition, we are able to run reports against unprocessed items to check backlog."

In addition to the speed and efficiency increases, Peters appreciates the ability to handle ongoing modifications and configuration needs herself. "It is so much better, not having to involve the vendor every time we want even the smallest change made. We feel like we are finally in control of our own destiny. If we need to undertake a project, we just do it – no more being held

hostage by someone else's development timetables, resources, or priorities." One such project that TIS has undertaken is the conversion of their prior document database over to AccuraImage™. "We are in the process of converting many years' worth of documents from the CBD-Docs™ platform to the AccuraImage™ platform," states Peters. "We want to be able to access all of our documents from the same repository – whether they had been scanned into the CBD-Docs™ system prior to conversion, or into the new AccuraImage™ system. We did not want to maintain two separate systems – especially when one is on a very old Lotus Notes® platform." Marsha Peters has always been a hands-on type of manager, and this project is no exception. "Sure, we could have told Lumtron, 'Here – do the conversion,' and I have every confidence that it would have been done well," she explains. "But that's not my style – and Lumtron understands that. So they gave us the tools to map out the data conversion ourselves – exactly the way we want it – and then we will turn the project over to them to run the actual conversion process. We really appreciate the fact that Lumtron knows how we want to do things, and is willing to do whatever is necessary to accommodate our wishes – even if it is not exactly normal operating procedure."

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Apparently, the feeling is mutual. Lumtron Vice President Paul Fotis comments, "This really is more of a partnership than a vendor-client relationship. Marsha is truly one of a kind – which is really too bad. We wish we had a hundred more Marshas as partners. She is, as is the entire staff at TIS, an absolute joy to work with."

About Lumtron Technologies

Lumtron Technologies is the insurance industry's premier provider of secure document and content management solutions. Established in 1984, we have a 20+ year track record of providing superior technology solutions with incomparable implementation strategies.

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