

TOP 10 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES IN 2019

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WHITE PAPER

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Introduction

When your documents are managed efficiently, your business runs more smoothly. The costs associated with closing deals naturally become lower. Your team is happier because they have less administrative duties. It's a great place to be.

In today's world, we're managing more data than ever. We require faster, more integrated systems. Our clients demand better transparency and collaboration. Yet we still struggle with how to organize and maintain our documents, digital or otherwise.

To become stronger than our competition, we must learn how to manage our data better. This requires knowing how to best store and share documents as well as the right tools to use to keep our processes efficient and employees highly productive.

Here are our top ten best practices for seamless document management in 2019 and beyond.

CONSISTENCY

1. Consistent Folder Structures

When folders are not consistently named and structured, documents are easily missed or forgotten when creating new folder structures.

This is mostly caused by human error. Our preferences for naming and structuring are very subjective. What makes sense to one person within your organization may not resonate with another. The best way to establish better consistency is to get everyone in your organization on the same page.

You could develop a list of pre-approved naming conventions, assign a gatekeeper to all things folder-related, or use templates within your preferred document management software. These templates may then be used across your entire client base, saving countless hours while ensuring consistency.

2. Pre-Defined Document Names

If folder names and structures are a pain point for your business, it's likely that your document names are also inconsistent.

When your files lack uniformity, it can be nearly impossible to management them even with the best system on the market. Developing pre-defined document names that work for everyone in your organization can help.

Try using an easy-to-remember formula that includes the document creation date and type, for instance. Even better, start all file names with the date they were created so you can sort them chronologically.

2. Tagging & Metadata

Despite templates and consistent naming conventions, you still need easy ways to remember where you put your documents.

Tags and metadata simplify data retention immensely. Simply tag a document with a client name or project ID. You can even set it up so that your customers can view and collaborate on the same documents as you in real time.

This use of metadata and tagging allows your business to search through documents much faster and organize how documents are displayed both internally and externally within the exact same document management system.

SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

4. Data Retention Policy Enforcement

Hoarding documents is much more common than purging them. As a growing business, you never know what documents you will need and when you will need them.

Document management systems can easily help with this. All you need to do is define some data retention policies and stick to them. You can even backup and archive older, unused documents based on your industry's regulations for document retention by creating policies to automate the process.

If you have any concerns about enforcing these policies, assign an administrator to manage the process. They should be trained on not only how to archive your data but also how to quickly restore it should the need arise.

5. Secure Collaboration

In our digital world, remote access to documents is critical. Document sharing is now something we do regularly, however easily we can.

This is not ideal for data security. Sharing data in email is done often and can leave personally identifiable information as well as privileged data

vulnerable to attacks. Selecting a secure document management system that enables seamless collaboration is the best way to ensure data security.

You can define your own data authentication processes, protect your documents with passwords and user permissions, and even set notifications to alert you when changes have been made or a download is initiated.

6. User Access & Permissions

As your business grows, so does your data. That is why it is critical to establish user access guidelines and permissions from the start.

Setting up role-based security allows you to determine who has access to what documents and when. This is especially important for document management done within systems designed for collaboration in and outside of your organization.

Restricting access to certain files or folders will also streamline business practices. Since these permissions and access levels can be changed at any time, it is always best to use caution when assigning permissions for new clients or employees.

7. Internal & External Audits

Monitoring document activity for audit purposes is something every business does, regardless of size or industry.

An important part of document management is establishing audit trails. Consistency in file structures and names will help auditors and administrators locate files quickly, and data retention policies will enable clean, easily navigated systems. Running reports on user activity can also be useful if documents are missing or found inaccurate.

Conducting regular internal audits is also highly recommended. This will

help identify problem areas before they become troublesome for your growing business.

WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT

8. Optimized Workflows

When paper filing systems fail or become inefficient, it only makes sense to migrate your documents to the cloud.

The primary role of document management systems is to make file retrieval easier and faster. Optimizing workflows to reduce the time your employees spend searching for the data they need to do their jobs.

Defining clear business processes and automating simple tasks can help with this. You may want to ask your employees what they spend the most time on and customize your document management software to create efficiencies.

9. File De-Duplication

Document management has come a long way. Gone are the days of stacks of old paperwork, dedicated rooms or buildings for file cabinets, and easily misplaced documents.

The struggle now is using a wide array of software to meet your needs. This tends to create a large amount of duplicate data and poor version control, which can lead to a highly inefficient workforce.

Selecting a document management system with robust integration can help. Simply leverage popular APIs to link your files to multiple platforms such as e-signature and data backup software. This will make your team look good and streamline your business processes to save money.

10. Simple User Interface

If you use a document management system, be sure to keep dashboards

clean. The goal is efficiency. Clutter can occur in a digital space just as much as a physical one.

Setting user permissions will help streamline the system for users, but it is still important to manage which elements are available to your users. Simplifying each user's workspace will

make it easier for them to track and manage tasks without interruption or delay.

If your employees struggle with how to manage dashboards or libraries, for instance, you can always assign a system administrator to monitor system design and performance.

About Qdrive

The Qdrive Assistant is a single, secure cloud workspace to seamlessly store and share your most important data. It's cost-effective, maximizes productivity, and helps you simplifying deal closings.

We understand how vital document and workflow management is to your company's success. That's why our software lets you define your own security policies, easily design templates, automate document management, and seamlessly share unlimited files with your team and your customers from one place, in seconds.

Visit www.qdrivesolutions.com today to try it free!

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