



Whitemountain Quarries
hails Canon's IT
solution priceless.

Whitemountain Quarries

Case Study

Canon

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Overview

Part of the successful Lagan Group of companies, Whitemountain Quarries Ltd has some very important customers extending across Europe. Principal contractors, construction companies, Government departments, regional and local councils, and other public bodies all rely on the company to supply a range of quarry materials, road surfacing, highway maintenance and civil engineering services.

Challenges

Catering for such an extensive range of customers, the company was facing the huge challenge of maintaining control over the processing and distribution of its weighbridge dockets, sales invoices and purchase invoices for five legal entities.

"We have ten depots and several large external sites generating endless paperwork. This paperwork needs to be collated, approved, processed and then stored for retrieval as required centrally back at our headquarters in Lisburn," explains Maurice McCracken, Group Accountant, Whitemountain Quarries.

Exemplifying the inefficiencies in the company's document processing was its previous manual hard copy weighbridge docket system. The company processes a vast number of weighbridge transactions every day that go to a diverse internal and external customer base. However, there was difficulty in matching up the signed dockets with their relevant sales ledger transaction within Sage, the company's accountancy software.

Each time a lorry was weighed, it was presented with a paper docket, which was then signed by our customer and had to be physically delivered to head office. These hard copy dockets would then be sorted into docket order manually and then sent to a digital archive company for scanning. The dockets were then returned for central storage. In total, this manual paper based process could take up to two months before the scanned images were available to credit control to give POD requests to customers. This slowed payments down from customers.

The key business challenge that Whitemountain Quarries faced was how their external operatives could get access to the necessary paperwork, to enable them to process sales invoices to customers, approve purchase ledger invoices and subsequently analyse their business operations, without the documentation physically leaving its primary site. In order to find an answer, the company approached several potential solutions providers, including Canon.

Solution

Commenting on the approach of Canon's consultancy team to his company's challenges, McCracken adds, "The Canon team were an open book, helping us reach the best solution for us as well as being totally open to further developing their offerings based on our feedback. **We had a great rapport with them, largely because they didn't approach us in a dictatorial manner, but always remained totally flexible, and the expertise they brought to the table continued to deliver creative and results-driven solutions.**"

Working closely with the Finance and IT departments at Whitemountain Quarries, Canon identified three key areas of the business that would benefit significantly from a document management solution with clearly defined workflow processes: its manual weighbridge dockets; the processing of its supplier invoices; and the management of its own customer sales invoices. The solution proposed by Canon recommended linking the company's existing accountancy software, Sage, directly to Therefore™, Canon's document scanning, retrieval and archiving solution.

"By integrating directly with Sage, Therefore™ transformed our key paper-based manual processes into highly efficient and accessible digital data that any one of our designated staff could retrieve at any time, and from any of our company sites," continues McCracken.

With the new system in place, each of the company's weighbridge dockets are now assigned a barcode to enable it to be scanned and automatically indexed with minimum human intervention and easily retrieved and matched up in the finance department for the processing of invoices. This has significantly sped up the process and virtually eliminated any potential indexing errors.

To further increase the accessibility of documentation, Therefore™ has been fully integrated with Microsoft SharePoint, giving complete accessibility to all business critical paper-based information. McCracken enthuses, "This seamless integration of solutions has given us the full functionality and user friendliness of Microsoft SharePoint with the added benefits of effective document capture and storage provided by Therefore™."



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Achievements

Maurice estimates that the programme is now saving the company upwards of £30,000 per year in saved time and resource. “It was costing the company around £2,000 per month to send our documents to be scanned externally and so far, there has been a six month payback on the Therefore™ installation.”

But it is the instant accessibility of the company’s business critical information that has left the biggest impression with McCracken and his team. Where previously, manual coordination and archiving procedures could take up to three months, it now takes a matter of days. **“We can now scan, process and store invoices and operational documentation without delay, which means that within a day or so, this is available at every site across the company for quick approvals and verification,”** he adds.

“Canon’s automated document management solution has not only had a significant effect in our day-to-day business, but it has also made those arduous tasks, such as auditing, simpler and even more enjoyable. **It has also sped up decision making in the boardroom, as business critical information can be quickly accessed.”**

McCracken concludes, “Information capturing, management and distribution has been revolutionised at Whitemountain Quarries by Canon’s information management solution. Our business can now be carried out without wasting time, money or resource. The difference Canon has made to the availability, accessibility and quality of our business information is priceless.”

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Maurice McCracken

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