



20 Days, 20,000 Boxes, 50% Under Budget – A Prestigious Chicago Law Firm

The Challenge

A prestigious Chicago Law Firm specializing in Patent Law, was renting space in a sub-basement of one of the most noted commercial movers in Chicago for their 20,000+ boxes. They were faced with many of the standard security and environmental issues that comes along with basement storage. Yet, the more looming issues were the high no-find file rate and their current lease was about to expire. Every missing file meant both time and money. When GRM met the Law Firm, their plan was to rent space in another building and find an Information Management Company to provide consultation. GRM created a proposal.

GRM outlined for the law firm many items that had not been considered when finding new space. For example, the Law Firm needed to create a racking system, install appropriate sprinkler systems, establish security measures, and receive the necessary approvals from the city. The Law Firm quickly learned there was more to this process than rental space, personnel and utilities. There was still the larger problem, their high no-find file rate. Impressed by GRM's knowledge and insight, The Law Firm called in the CEO of the firm to hear GRM's proposed 'total solution.' What GRM ultimately proposed was a solution that included security, a complete transfer of boxes and data, with a net result of 100% file retrieval rate. The GRM solution was right in line with the proposed budget, and the solution was accepted. There was one last caveat, 20,000 boxes needed to be transferred, indexed, and shelved as well as being completely accessible throughout the process, within 20 business days. The bar had been set and GRM was put to task.

The Solution

In order to achieve such an aggressive goal, GRM created a detailed timeline of steps that needed to be taken. The first step was indexing. With the GRM plan, using compete automation, GRM could eliminate 95% of the manual labor and make this a completely efficient, automated and accurate process. Each box already contained a barcode from the law firm and each individual file within the box also held a unique barcode. The associated data, client name, matter number etc... was kept in the Law Firm's in-house software package. The Law Firm's internal system of information was flawless, so it was a matter of capturing the barcoded file numbers and transferring data. Again, the more automated the process, the fewer key strokes a human would have to make, the more efficient the process, and more human error could be eliminated.



GRM took the first step and barcoded all the boxes with a GRM barcode and placed them on pallets. The boxes were then moved to GRM's facility where they went through the indexing process. GRM set up a conveyor. GRM scanned the GRM container barcode and then the law firm's container barcode. Now these two items were cross referenced. They then scanned each individual file barcode within the box. This linked the associated files to the parent box number.

SCANNING PROCESS:

GRM BOX BARCODE → LAW FIRM BOX BARCODE FILE BARCODE
FILE BARCODE
FILE BARCODE
FILE BARCODE

- Now GRM barcode, Law Firm Barcode and Individual File Barcodes would be linked in GRM's system.
- Any file could be pulled individually and they would be linked back to the box barcode.
- The Law Firm could order by their barcode. As soon as this number was keyed into GRM's system the associated GRM box barcode would populate.
- The two systems became completely cross referenced.

The next step was to upload the associated data entry. GRM MIS department went right to work. At the end of each day, a data file was created of all the files and boxes that were scanned by GRM. The GRM MIS team then did a compare of this information to the database supplied by The Law Firm. When the system found a matching file number, the associated information was uploaded into the system.

DATA TRANSFER

The system looks for a hit or match based on file number:

File 123456 File 123456

Then the system uploads the associated data:

Associated Data Uploaded (Matter Number, Client Name etc...)

This process continued each day, for each file.

As each day closed, the Law Firm could order files or boxes by their internal box numbers as this information was now captured within GRM's system. On GRM's part, they could assure a file would never be placed back in the wrong box because of their validation process. If GRM ever tries to scan a file barcode to the wrong box, the system will signify an error at the point of the scan. This literally guarantees the integrity of the files over the long haul. Equally important, with all the data entry information on another system (GRM's), a key element of the law firm's contingency plan has been created. If they ever have a problem with their system, GRM can act as a back up and supply the necessary information electronically to them to get them up and running. The Law Firm had just created a dual back up.



The Results

At the end of the project Dan O'Reilly, General Manger for GRM Chicago, got to make a very gratifying phone call. Finishing earlier than anticipated, Dan called the firm's CEO to tell him, "The good news is we are done earlier than expected. The better news is you can now find all your files. The best news is the job came in 50% under budget." As you would expect, The Law Firm quickly became a very satisfied customer; Dan O'Reilly, a very happy man.

Today, GRM pulls approximately 3,000 files per month for the Law Firm, at a success rate of 100% as promised. The Law Firm uses eAccess, GRM's proprietary internet solution to place orders quickly and efficiently. The Law Firm can search by any field populated and do many advanced searches on their off-site material without ever leaving their desks. As files continue to be added daily, the Law Firm supplies an electronic file and GRM imports this data following the same procedures used in the initial transfer. "The Law Firm is getting great service, they have saved a lot of money, and rely on us everyday," said Dan. He continued, "but the true value is having a file in their hand when they need it. At the end of the day, that is the real success story here."

20,000 boxes, 20 days, 50% under budget, a job well done.