

Case Studies

In April 2004 the Minnesota Department of Human Services began converting all of the back files of 18 business units to electronic files, all with the help of people with developmental disabilities. With the completion of these selected files, the remaining back files will be imaged. Working in teams, these employees have scanned 3.5 million pages.



At the Olmsted County Corrections Department, people with developmental disabilities are scanning files of closed cases at a rate of 2,000 pages per day. Bell & Howell equipment and IBM software are used to scan and label paper files. Since the start of the project in May 2004, over 400,000 pages have been scanned, indexed and coded by people with developmental disabilities.



Trendex, Inc., a St. Paul based manufacturing company with operations in Iowa and Colorado, employs a team of three people with disabilities and a job coach to scan its customer records. The annual savings from the digital imaging system equals the salaries of two to three full time workers. In just two months, an entire year's customer files were scanned into the computer.



In considering Digital Imaging Services, think of savings . . .

More than ever, it is important that businesses and other employers track the bottom line results of their decisions. The evidence is clear that digital scanning projects to convert paper files to computer disks can reap real savings. Some 10,000 pages of records require an entire four foot wide file cabinet for storage, but that can all fit on one computer disk! Take it one step further and hire people with developmental disabilities to accomplish the goals and the savings may be even greater.

A recent survey of more than 600 Minnesota employers revealed:

- ⇒ employees with physical or sensory disabilities rated equal to or higher than coworkers in similar positions on virtually all performance measures
- ⇒ the benefits of providing accommodations, when needed, outweighed the costs of providing them.

**10,000 pages of records =
4 foot wide file cabinet =
1 computer disk!**

Background on the initiative to promote digital imaging employment for people with developmental disabilities

Introductory information and training will be provided at sites across Minnesota, making it easier for government agencies and other employers to get started. This program is being offered in all of Minnesota's economic development regions with the goal of simplifying record keeping and making it more efficient, utilizing the abilities of people with disabilities.

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A new dimension for digital imaging. . .



A New Day for People with Developmental Disabilities

Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Good for People - - -

Opportunities

The realm of digital imaging and other electronic office activities is opening up a full range of working opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. This has been an exciting new experience for many, moving them from service and support jobs to more regular posts in office settings.

While positions with "technical" aspects were long considered off-limits for people with developmental disabilities, a number of studies and demonstration projects have shown the opposite to be true. In records conversion, the steps in the process can be set forth clearly, and then they are repeated with one document after another. The repetitive nature of the work provides a routine more easily learned and practiced by the workers.

Social Integration

Oftentimes, people with developmental disabilities in digital imaging positions are working in teams, frequently in larger administrative areas.

Generally, people are treated as regular employees, although at times extra support is provided.

Transportation can normally be arranged with little difficulty, with the individual involved using public transportation, riding in a special services vehicle or traveling independently.



In opening up new areas of opportunity for people with developmental disabilities, digital imaging can help build long term careers, perhaps broadening into wider office support work, all while earning income in the process.



Good for Business - - -

Business organizations were among the first to recognize the benefits of electronic data storage—the ease of access, reduction in the space required and the ability to exchange information in a secure manner. Companies are just learning, however, that people with developmental disabilities can be an important source of workers for these tasks. This can open the way for significant cost savings, while also providing productive and rewarding employment for people with disabilities.

Training services are available to companies seeking qualified workers and cost effective means of achieving these solid benefits and savings for their own organizations.



Good for the Public Sector - - -

Government administration isn't always thought of as being in the forefront of technological innovation, nor "early adopters," but public agencies are demonstrating leadership in the digital imaging area. They are also beginning to employ people with developmental disabilities to get the job done, helping to get the work done while doing good in the communities they serve.

A major records conversion project at the Minnesota Department of Human Services is reducing records space requirements by two thirds, all accomplished with trained people who have developmental disabilities. Project after project is demonstrating how employers of all sorts can make effective use of people with developmental disabilities to meet their operating objectives. Helping build career options for individuals who want to work, while getting the people's work done.



Start up questions - - -

What equipment and software are needed for imaging?

What are the space requirements?

How do I contact the people with disabilities in my area who can do this work?

How much can we save?

How can I get started?

