

Accounting firm declares war on paper

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Last updated 13:57 30/01/2012



Running a tank over your old filing cabinets is one way to end the paper trail.

Small Business

Driving an army tank over the office filing cabinet seems a dramatic way of introducing a paper-free environment at work, but a Blenheim accounting firm has done just that.

Three years ago, the accumulation of boxes and filing cabinets filling the offices of TVA Lock chartered accountants on Scott St prompted directors to consider how they could become more user-friendly and efficient.

They have converted to a paperless office system, and the bulky filing cabinets are gradually being phased out.

Then when director Peter Tolan received a voucher from his wife for his 50th birthday from Tanks for Everything in Christchurch, he immediately thought of the satisfaction of crushing the ungainly cabinets and their old system along with it, under the tracks of a 52-tonne battle tank.

So that is exactly what he did.

Director Brian Creedy said the idea to go paperless was part of a larger scheme to maximise efficiency using innovative technology and speed up the turn-around time for their customers.

"We had 16 four-drawer filing cabinets, with boxes of files underfoot and shelves of paperwork, our office was very cluttered and untidy and it was getting harder and harder to keep track of everything," he said.

Now all records are stored in a server and backed up every day, a much cheaper alternative to the firm's former off-site storage unit. Paper use has been slashed by about 70 per cent, Mr Creedy said.

"If we needed any records beyond last years' we used to phone someone to dig out the file at 'the bunker' and get them to bring it up to us.

"Storage space on a server is a lot cheaper than off-site, plus it saves time and staff. When a client rings up with a query, I've got all their records right there in front of me."

Instead of comparing paper copies of bank accounts with balance sheets, each staff member has two computer screens with the digital copies in front of them.

Mr Creedy admitted he was dubious about having two screens at first, but is even considering a third. There were a few hiccups during the first 12 months as staff got used to the system but they would never go back, he said.

"It was second nature for the younger staff, but for us older accountants there was a bit of comfort having that file tucked under your arm. Now we are all used to it, we're providing a better, more timely service," he said.

"The whole concept has worked so well we've had other accounting firms from Christchurch visit us to check out our system."

- The Marlborough Express

COMMENTS



Jezza #22 04:01 am Feb 01 2012

I thought that people knew the cutting down a sustainable tree, pupling it and then burying it is a carbon sink. Its that '80s feeling all over again.



AlanH #21 10:36 pm Jan 30 2012

I remember a story a few years ago of a law firm (in New York I think) that went "paperless" in the 1990s. A reporter visited them a few years later and found the operation was more chaotic than ever and they had trouble finding much of anything. I like the idea of a paperless office, but all staff need to be diciplined and follow a simple, efficient filing regime. Incidentally, the worst offenders where I work for printing out emails and other documents (and then not collecting them off the communal printer) are the tertiary educated 20-somethings. Go figure!



ramyon #20 10:10 pm Jan 30 2012

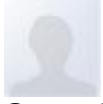
@in1977

There is nothing evil about using paper except accounting firms and the like have historically used alot of paper for reporting and compliance purposes. Paper use on this sort of scale is both expensive, cumbersome and with todays technology unnecessary. I'm frankly surprised that more accounting firms aren't doing all they can to reduce their huge stationery bills....



wissler #19 09:50 pm Jan 30 2012

Hate to break it to you "Think about it! #1", but New Zealand actually imports most of its paper. Firstly, most paper isn't actually made from trees, sure wood fibre is one ingredient, but it's not the main ingredient, in fact wood-free papers are quite common. Secondly, New Zealand only has a handful of paper mills, and most of them only produce low grade papers like newsprint and packaging board. Most of the paper you're average office worker uses comes from Asia or Europe.



Greg #18 07:00 pm Jan 30 2012

Nothing wrong with replacing paper records. Everything right about running over stuff with a tank. BUT Green washing paperless systems by selling them as being environmental? Utter bollocks. Paper and other wood products from sustainable forests = carbon sink. They even use sustainable wood furnaces to power production. Honestly, if anyone is worried about cutting down pine trees in New Zealand they really do define the term tree-hugger.



Sam #17 06:49 pm Jan 30 2012

#12: Why's that? They're all carrying web enabled smart phones...



Brian #16 05:33 pm Jan 30 2012

Cool tank, maybe we could run over a few boy racers cars with it.



paper #15 04:23 pm Jan 30 2012

I've worked in many places in a few industrys. And all of them could defintly lower ther paper consumption, by well over half easy. but not all could go completly paperfree at the moment.



Nick #14 04:15 pm Jan 30 2012

@ Think about it #1

Think about this, genius...It's called a sense of humour. It's a sustainable crop found domestically and overseas in most decent human beings. Maybe if you grew one you'd stop writing stupid, boring, beige comments on these clearly good natured, fun stories...



Scathsealgaire #13 04:11 pm Jan 30 2012

Nice!! free advertising well played TVA, well played.

Cheers, Scathsealgaire

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