

Hostos Community College

Saving time and money with electronic employee records management



Business overview

Hostos Community College is a two-year institution in South Bronx, New York. One of 23 schools in the City University of New York (CUNY) system, the college strives to provide higher education access to all who seek it. The student population of approximately 5,100 is diverse, with many cultural groups represented. Approximately 1,000 faculty and staff work across six buildings on the CUNY Hostos campus.

Challenges

In the past, managing Hostos Community College employee records—from job applications and resumes to contracts and benefit forms—was primarily a manual activity that involved physically shuttling paper files back and forth between file cabinets and work stations, as well as within and between buildings. Management of these paper records was at best inefficient, at worst risky.

Water leakage destroys paper files

On occasion, paper files were misplaced. Tracking down such files could also delay processing of documents, such as job applications or requests for new faculty appointments. Paper could also be damaged more easily than electronic records.

“We had known for a while that we could benefit from a more efficient process,” said James Wong, a human resources information systems coordinator at Hostos, “but the need to protect documents is what finally drove us to find and implement an electronic file system.” After a water leakage incident destroyed a large quantity of files, the college began looking at image and document management solutions.

EMC solution

Because of its requirements for robustness and ease of use, Hostos Community College chose EMC® Documentum® ApplicationXtender®. CASO Inc., an IT service provider that specializes in document management, helped design and implement the ApplicationXtender document management and workflow system.

With help from CASO, Hostos is currently in the process of scanning and indexing into the ApplicationXtender system the six million pages of documentation related to all of the college’s employees—past and present. Twelve staff members in human resources regularly access the scanned information to process employee records, job applications, requests for faculty appointments, and other processes. Hostos employees in other departments are also using the system. For instance, for reappointments, the faculty review board uses it to ensure that faculty members have up-to-date credentials in their files.

Hours saved every day, thanks to quick, easy access

“In the past, searching for a misplaced file could take anywhere from 30 minutes to half a day or longer,” said Wong. “Now, HR can simply type in the name of the employee or other indexed information and images of the documents appear on screen almost instantly.” For example, to verify employment eligibility of a candidate, an HR specialist enters the candidate’s name and work authorization request, and immediately accesses I-9 document information. Retrieving and printing a copy of a file now takes about three minutes, as opposed to the 20 minutes experienced before ApplicationXtender. “The process is 85 percent faster—which adds up to several hours saved every day.”

Cost savings from reduced paper expenses and compliance with FLSA and other regulations

By reducing dependence on paper, the ApplicationXtender system saves the college a significant amount annually in printing and copying expenses, not to mention the productivity gained through less printing, copying, scanning, e-mailing, faxing, and filing. And by facilitating compliance with various HR-related regulations, the EMC system helps Hostos Community College to avoid the substantial costs associated with compliance violations.

For instance, the college can be subject to audits and penalties if a new employee’s job description does not align with Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) status. Likewise, employer penalties for I-9 violations can be onerous. “ApplicationXtender makes it much easier for HR to ensure that the college is in compliance, and thereby avoid facing such penalties,” said Wong.

Security at the document level

With the ApplicationXtender system, employee records are not only safe from risks like water damage, they are also much more secure than paper files stored in a cabinet or storage box. “Now I can control who views which files—down to the document level,” says Wong.

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James Wong, Human Resources Information Systems Coordinator

Workflow streamlines business processing

Using ApplicationXtender workflow helps streamline a number of human resource-related processes, such as job application submissions. When a prospective employee submits a job application, it is scanned into ApplicationXtender, and then automatically routed for review to the appropriate HR specialist. Address and other information is routed to another specialist who verifies whether job candidates are qualified to work in the United States; reference contact information is routed to the person in charge of reference checks, and so on.

Hostos Community College utilizes a workflow to route a prospective applicant’s identification documents to campus security for review and ID card processing. In order to accelerate the processing of paycheck deductions, ApplicationXtender Workflow will soon route to payroll all pension enrollments and union dues applications.

Integration with other systems further streamlines and improves processes

The integration of ApplicationXtender with some of the college's other systems compresses processes and time spent on them. For instance, by integrating a home-grown personnel request system into ApplicationXtender, the college has confidence knowing that all information on potential new hires is contained within one system. Integration with a SQL database of employee information that links to an HR information system eliminates information discrepancies across the two systems. "In the past, we often had reports from disconnected HR systems showing inconsistent spelling of names, employment start dates, or even social security numbers," said Wong.

Native integration with Formatta E-Forms Manager provides electronic signature capability and automatic electronic routing based on information in the forms. For example, once a recruitment authorization form has been completed and appropriate electronic signatures obtained, the Formatta software automatically exports into the ApplicationXtender system all of the information contained in the form, including index values and image attachments. To keep the recruitment process moving, once the form arrives in ApplicationXtender an administrator is immediately notified by e-mail alert.

In the future, to improve efficiency, Hostos Community College plans to make enhancements to the ApplicationXtender system. To minimize manual indexing and human error, the system now enables bar coding on scanned paper forms. The college also plans to expand use of the system and workflow to other campus departments.

Summary

With EMC Documentum ApplicationXtender, Hostos Community College now provides fast and easy access to employee records, saving its human resources department hours every day. Integrating the ApplicationXtender system e-forms software with other systems also streamlines processes such as job application submissions and authorization to recruit new faculty and staff. In addition, using ApplicationXtender slashes printing, copying, and other paper-related expenses, facilitates compliance, and provides document-level security.

About CASO

CASO DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT (www.casoinc.com) has been an innovator in developing practical, cost-effective imaging services and document management systems since 1994. Its management team brings over 100 years of document imaging and document management experience to each engagement.

About EMC

EMC Corporation (NYSE: EMC) is the world's leading developer and provider of information infrastructure technology and solutions that enable organizations of all sizes to transform the way they compete and create value from their information. Information about EMC's products and services can be found at www.EMC.com.



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