

Industry	Healthcare Manufacturing
Critical Issue	Customer support unable to locate and retrieve documents from shared file servers.
Solution	Alternative to shared file network where files are full-text searchable and easy to access, and scanned files are instantly indexed.
Result	Improved customer service and employee efficiency; reduced storage space, faster handling time for files; workers in remote locations can access network files.

No more dumb (shared) file servers at FLA Orthopedics

FLA Orthopedics supplies domestic and international distributors and retailers with over 700 unique soft goods products, each having a considerable cache of documents the company has to stay on top of to do business. This manufacturing company of 200 employees based in Miramar, Florida, manages CAD drawings, heat tests, manufacturing instructions, and engineering change orders, along with customer orders and shipping documentation. Keeping track of all this had become a major challenge that FLA Orthopedics' IT Director Chris Honig took on earlier this year.

Problems: storage costs, time spent handling paper files, and lack of organization

To save storage costs as well as the time and money associated with handling paper files, Honig's first move in turning to digital documents was to install industrial-strength scanners at the company's plant and headquarters operations. But the software that came with the scanners didn't provide the kind of functionality that would enable FLA Orthopedics' customer service department to locate and retrieve pertinent documents when they were on the phone with customers. Which is where ColumbiaSoft's Document Locator came into the picture.

"What I really needed was a solution to the lack of organization on our 'dumb' file servers. Information went from an individual's C drive to a shared drive, and the management of these files was arbitrary at best," said Honig. "Customer service needed help accessing files fast, and our quality department required a similar system because accessing correct, current product documents is critical. I needed a comprehensive document management system that was also easy for our staff to use—and one that I could afford."



“ Document Locator has improved our customer service. We can now find documents in seconds vs. minutes—a major plus for our customer service representatives.”

Chris Honig

IT Director
FLA Orthopedics
Miramar, Florida

Microsoft
GOLD CERTIFIED
Partner

Seamless
Windows
Integration

Customer Service gets Document Locator

Honig is initially deploying Document Locator with customer service, taking some 200,000 existing scanned .tif documents and importing them directly into a Document Locator repository where they are retrieved through full-text searching.

“We could do more elaborate profiling, but for these kinds of documents and the needs of our staff, full-text searching is the easiest way to go. It doesn’t require much, if any, training to use,” said Honig.

“Staffers don’t get lost trying to find their way through the system, our customer service reps can quickly find what they need, and all I had to do was ‘pour’ them in, which was easy using Document Locator’s importer tool. This simple use of the system has probably paid for itself already.”

Next step: the Quality department

Next up on Honig’s To-Do list is to introduce Document Locator to the quality department. This is a more elaborate process, and will involve organizing and converting to digital format close to 50,000 documents required for FLA Orthopedics’ product lines. When finished, the quality department will use Document Locator to help implement necessary business processes as well as store, organize, and locate documents.

“Currently, we do approvals and notifications by phone or fax with hard copy documents and signatures. Once we’re set up, this will all be done using Document Locator,” said Honig. “We’ll end up with a ‘manufacturing master file,’ which will include change orders, bills of material, and temperature testing, etc., for each product. We’ll assign templates for ‘master forms,’ and put in place approvals and notifications processes for each

product. We can create the process for one product line and then ‘template’ it for the others. This will create efficiencies we’ve always wanted.”

Web access makes it even better

FLA Orthopedics purchased Document Locator Professional as well as Document Locator’s optional WebTools Module. The latter enables customer service personnel located at the company’s corporate office and employees at its manufacturing facility to access Document Locator and view the same documents using the company’s network. FLA Orthopedics runs Document Locator on a 1.26 GHz SQL Server, running Microsoft Server 2000.

As FLA Orthopedics moves towards consolidating all of its company data, Chris Honig foresees Document Locator becoming one of the company’s most valuable assets.