**Improve Processes Help You Capitalize on New Opportunities**

Document and information processes, often considered simply back office cost centers, can in fact play a vital role in empowering sales, other customer-facing, and product-development organizations to capitalize on new business opportunities. Taking action to streamline and optimize these processes can help get new products and services to market faster. Ninety-one percent of respondents in a recent Ricoh-sponsored global survey agree, estimating an improvement in speed of 13.4%, on average. Improving information sharing also helps ensure that new offerings not only meet customers’ needs and capture maximum opportunity, but have what it takes to beat the competition.

**Figure 1. Fixing Customer-Facing Document Processes Can Speed Time to Market by 13.4%**

Q16a. If you waved that magic wand and fixed all the issues in effectiveness and efficiency in your customer-facing document-driven business processes, what effect would it have on your ability to address customer needs or respond to changes in the market?

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Joyce Ouellette, Director, Strategic Marketing, Ricoh Americas Corporation

About Joyce

Joyce Ouellette joined Ricoh Americas Corporation in 2004 and currently holds the role of Director, Strategic Marketing where she is responsible for vertical and segment marketing, and global marketing communications leadership for services. Previously, Ouellette served as Director of Solutions Marketing, where she was responsible for Ricoh software technology product marketing and software partner marketing for the Americas.

Before joining Ricoh, Ouellette served as Vice President of Sales for 3DConnexion, a Logitech company. Prior to that, she was Senior Vice President / General Manager of the 3D Technology Group at Labtec (acquired by Logitech in 2001). In addition, Ouellette held various senior executive positions managing global sales, marketing and business development during an 11-year career at Spacetec IMC Corporation. As a founder and executive at Spacetec, Ouellette was directly involved in the company’s Initial Public Offering in December 1995.

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1 As part of our part of our Process Imperative, Ricoh commissioned IDC to survey over 1,516 executives, business process owners and iWorkers across the globe on document and information processes. The results of this survey have been summarized in an IDC White Paper sponsored by Ricoh, “Organizational Blind Spot: The Role of Document-Driven Processes in Driving Top-Line Growth.” September 2012.
The ability to recognize, capture and communicate new opportunities distinguishes market leaders (those breaking new ground) from laggards (those stuck in old patterns and challenged by change.) In today’s global electronic marketplace, less agile and adaptable organizations are increasingly vulnerable. And business agility is directly affected by a company’s ability to get the right information—in the most useful format—to the right person at the right time.

**Getting to Market Faster with Winning Products and Services**

Businesses are constantly trying to field products and services that meet the changing needs of their customers. Successfully determining what the market requires (and being able to document and communicate that) is critical for a competitive business. What sometimes gets lost in the day-to-day tactics of servicing customers is that **customer-facing resources are in the best position to identify where needs are not being met.** (Note: With today’s wired workforce, social media makes it possible for anyone in the company to be customer-facing).

How do your processes support the identification and capture of needs not yet fulfilled by existing products and services? How do they help communicate market requirements and their value to those who design and develop new offerings?

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Document and information processes must be engineered to accommodate different types of information (electronic, hardcopy, structured, unstructured), **different work styles** and meet requirements for different levels of complexity.

Collaboration is critical to successfully bringing together the customer-facing resources who understand the market need and those who will design winning products and services to meet them.

The key to empowering collaboration is a deep understanding of the fundamental processes themselves: **input** (the creation of information, whether at the front lines or within the design and development process), **throughput** (how information moves collaboration between teams), and **output** (processing information in a way to add business value).
Collaborative processes must also accommodate the necessary iteration that is an important part of product and service innovation. It’s rare that any of us get it right the first time. Iteration is essential to innovation, ensuring that products and services map closely to what the market really needs.

The last thing you need is “grit in the wheels” of collaborative innovation: slowing or stopping your ability to get the right information to the right players at the right time. Three key attributes to look for in “collaboration enabled” processes:

- Fast access to the most current electronic and/or hard copy documents—whichever is the most useful in any given situation;
- Knowledge of who touched a document last and where documents are in the process—critical pieces of information that help facilitate collaboration and improve outcomes;
- Securing documents from inappropriate access, theft or loss; this helps protect your competitive advantage, and your intellectual property.

In our Managed Document Services, we work with customers to understand how an enterprise accesses, uses and stores information in collaborative processes—identifying any “grit” in the wheels. Then, we reengineer those processes to help make collaboration and innovation more efficient and effective. With well-honed collaborative document and information processes, you are more likely to recognize market opportunity faster and field new products and services to help generate new revenue streams.

**Improving Competitive Advantage**

Study respondents said fixing processes would help their organization more rapidly address customer needs (78 percent); respond more quickly to market changes (65 percent); and improve their competitive stance (63 percent).

“The last thing you need is ‘grit in the wheels’ of collaborative innovation: slowing or stopping your ability to get the right information to the right players at the right time.”
Q13. If you could wave a magic wand and fix all the issues in effectiveness and efficiency in your customer-facing document-driven business processes, what overall effect do you believe it would have on your organization?

The ability to better and more rapidly address customer needs helps give you a strategic competitive advantage—beyond retaining your current customers. Streamlining your document and information processes, ranging from customer on-boarding, support and service through billing and collections, positions you to step in and help “rescue” unhappy customers of less responsive competitors. In this age of social media, where reputations for service can be made and broken with a tweet, streamlined processes can quickly become a selling point along with the quality of the products and services you offer.

This competitive advantage is quite real: as we explored in a recent perspective on increasing top line revenue, six in ten respondents queried in recent research said that ineffective processes would sour a customer experience to the point that they would switch to another vendor.

The ability to respond rapidly to changes in the marketplace provides another source of competitive advantage. You need to take a strategic approach to your information infrastructure that will let you seize on new opportunities when the market changes:

- Move rapidly in when competitors stumble or leave the marketplace;
- Anticipate and overcome new challengers entering the marketplace;

“In this age of social media, where reputations for service can be made and broken with a tweet, streamlined processes can quickly become a selling point along with the quality of the products and services you offer.”
• Respond to trends driving changes in market behavior.

An infrastructure that effectively supports competitiveness and corporate growth is even more critical today given the increasing volume, variety, and value of information flowing through the enterprise. Businesses are turning to virtualization technology, SaaS on-demand applications and cloud-based storage (public and private) for a more responsive and flexible infrastructure (as well as cost savings).

Standardizing enterprise document management applications and databases reduces storage redundancy and ‘silos’ of business information, and helps employees access information where and when they need it. Infrastructure that more quickly adapts or incorporates workforce trends like mobility, social media and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) also enables faster, more well-informed collaboration.

Ricoh’s worldwide presence helps ensure the delivery of consistent services everywhere you do business. Our goal is to create an incredibly efficient information infrastructure that allows your staff to work and collaborate like never before. No matter where you choose to do business, we can help you build a consistent, efficient and globally-connected information infrastructure. This streamlines your ability to expand into new markets and expand your global reach.

Find out more about Our MDS Approach at Ricoh Managed Document Services—and visit Ricoh’s Process Imperative to learn more about the results from this survey.

**Ricoh Company, Ltd.**

Ricoh Company, Ltd. is a global technology leader, specializing in the office and production printing markets. Ricoh works with organizations around the world to modernize work environments and optimize document efficiency. With more than 108,500 employees worldwide, Ricoh operates in Europe, the Americas, Asia/Pacific, China, and Japan. Ricoh’s worldwide sales were more than 2,016 billion yen ($21 billion USD) in the year ended March 31, 2010.

**Ricoh’s Managed Document Services (MDS)**

Ricoh’s MDS approach is an extension and evolution of MPS, which addresses the three fundamental functions relating to the entire document management ecosystem of input, throughput, and output. Ricoh’s MDS aims to streamline core business processes by focusing on

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**Learn More about Increasing Revenue and Reducing Risks**

This Ricoh Perspective addresses the ways improving document and information processes can help you capitalize on new business opportunities.

Visit our MDS Knowledge Center to learn more about:

- The three most important document and information best practices you can employ to keep customers happy, improve the lifetime value of customers and help increase top line revenue;
- The most effective strategies for protecting your business processes and ensuring the proper governance of all your critical business information;
- The three things most critical in minimizing risk to your revenue stream, customer relationships and business growth.
process, people, and technology and innovation to create a state of continuous improvement. Ricoh aims to help organizations better manage and leverage information for improved business outcomes through a flexible, partnership-led approach. Services management is the fundamental pillar to govern the print and document services program, aided with expert consultancy as well as proven project and change management methodologies. Ricoh is recognized today by both IDC and Gartner as a leader in the industry.

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