

KwikWork

IBM Case Study

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Kenneth Jones, Business Systems Services Supervisor, PowerSouth Energy Cooperative

PowerSouth Energy Cooperative

Keeping electricity services flowing with smart content management

Content underpins every aspect of operations at PowerSouth, from invoicing to asset management and customer service. With its legacy document management system at end of life, the energy cooperative needed to act fast to find a replacement—or it risked leaving employees, partners and customers in the dark.

Business challenge

As PowerSouth’s core content management system—covering everything from invoicing to customer service—neared end of life, how could it make sure that it didn’t leave members and customers in the dark?

Transformation

PowerSouth reinvigorated its content management landscape with a suite of solutions from IBM and enChoice, connecting teams to the data they need to keep operations running smoothly at all times.

Results

Drives

more efficient, accurate operations with improved insight and control of content

Saves

time and effort previously spent on manual document management tasks

Ensures

uninterrupted service to energy distribution members and their end customers



Business challenge story

Keeping complex operations on track

As consumers on the receiving end, electricity seems pretty straightforward—we flip a switch or connect a plug and the power just flows. But behind the scenes, the journey from the generating plant to our sockets can be incredibly complex—something that PowerSouth knows very well.

As an electric cooperative, PowerSouth's mission is to provide a reliable and affordable supply of energy to its distribution members, so that they in turn can keep power flowing to hundreds of thousands of consumers. To achieve this, the company operates six power plants and a transmission network that spans more than 2,272 miles of electricity lines and 294 substations.

With such a large and complex infrastructure to manage, ensuring fast, consistent access to information is key to keeping operations running smoothly around the clock. Employees at all levels of the business—from engineers to accounts payable (AP) teams—must manage a vast array of content to ensure that assets are properly maintained, invoices are paid on time, regulations are met, and more.

As Kenneth Jones, Business Systems Services Supervisor at PowerSouth Energy Cooperative, describes: "Content is absolutely central to our business. For example, in our AP department, we process around 2,000 invoices a month, and we must turn them around quickly in order to meet payment deadlines and keep our suppliers happy. The same goes for member billing—we need to prepare accurate and timely monthly statements so they can arrange the appropriate payment."

To stay on top of all this information, PowerSouth previously relied on a legacy document management system that had been in place for more than 15 years.

"Our old system had served our needs well in the past, but it was definitely starting to show its age," continues Kenneth Jones. "We wanted to move to a modern content management platform that could grow with us, and provide a stable, secure foundation for all the information we work with across the enterprise."

Transformation story

Taking content management to the next level

PowerSouth selected a suite of IBM Enterprise Content Management (ECM) solutions to drive tight control over the end-to-end document lifecycle—from initial capture to storage and case management.

"We have been using IBM technology for decades at PowerSouth, so we know first-hand how reliable and effective the solutions are, and how good the support is—you really can't go wrong with IBM," notes Kenneth Jones. "When it came to introducing a new content management platform, it was an easy decision to go with IBM."

Once PowerSouth had decided on a software solution, its attention turned to finding an expert partner to guide a successful implementation. This search led the cooperative to enChoice—an IBM Premier Business Partner.



Kenneth Jones recalls: “We run a lean IT team and don’t employ anyone with specialist ECM skills in-house, which made it important for us to find a partner with the right expertise to fill the gap. What enChoice brought to the table was a tremendous amount of experience in the ECM world. The team we worked with had years of experience with IBM FileNet Content Manager and IBM Case Manager, which particularly impressed us.”

Today, PowerSouth uses IBM® Datacap to capture all inbound documents and transform them into rich electronic content, which is stored in a central repository, built on IBM FileNet® Content Manager software. The cooperative has harnessed enChoice KwikWork Integrator to seamlessly integrate the new IBM solutions with existing line of business (LOB) applications, including the Oracle E-Business Suite.

Kenneth Jones explains: “The great thing about the KwikWork Integrator is that it allows users working in LOB systems to access ECM data without having to log into the IBM system separately. For instance, if an employee is processing an invoice in Oracle E-Business Suite Financials and wants to view the original invoice, he or she simply has to click a button and it will bring up a new window with the relevant document image. Teams can get to the content they need without having to jump back and forth between multiple applications, which saves them a great deal of time and makes it easier to ensure that they are working with the most up-to-date information.”

In addition, the legal team at PowerSouth takes advantage of IBM Case Manager and KwikWork Legal to efficiently manage cases and all related documents from a single point of control.



Results story

Powering better service

PowerSouth has been able to streamline a number of processes, bringing newfound efficiency to different functional areas.

Kenneth Jones states: “IBM and enChoice solutions have made invoice processing much more efficient and accurate. We’ve added barcodes to all our invoices, and when they are processed by Datacap, the system automatically captures key details such as the supplier number, all line items and their quantity, and links it with the relevant supplier record in our Oracle Financials application.

“This has eliminated the need for staff to key in the same information into our invoicing system manually—saving time and reducing the risk of error, which ultimately helps us ensure that invoices are paid accurately and on time, every time. As a result, PowerSouth maintains great working relationships with our partners, and can ensure that we have the supplies and support we need to keep energy flowing to our members and their customers.”



He adds: “We’ve introduced a similar functionality for member billing. We generate member bills and reports breaking down their usage in PDF format. Previously, we would have to scan these files separately in order to import them into our main content repository. Now, thanks to the integrations we have made using IBM and enChoice solutions, users can just drag and drop the files directly into FileNet Content Manager.”

PowerSouth has established a reliable content management foundation that it can count on to deliver timely, consistent access to information—both now and far into the future.

Kenneth Jones concludes: “It is still early days on our new content management journey and we are already seeing positive changes to the way that our people work with information. IBM and enChoice have brought a new level of insight and control to our operations. We have a solid foundation to take us into the future, and I believe that we are going to be in very good shape moving forward with all that we want to achieve.”

About PowerSouth Energy Cooperative

PowerSouth Energy Cooperative is an energy generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative catering to the wholesale power needs of 20 distribution members—16 electric cooperatives and four municipal electric systems—in Alabama and northwest Florida. PowerSouth owns and operates six generation facilities and holds ownership interest in an additional facility, utilizing a mix of natural gas, coal and hydroelectricity.

Solution component

IBM® Case Manager

IBM Content Navigator

IBM Datacap

IBM FileNet® Content Manager

enChoice KwikWork Integrator

enChoice KwikWork Legal



Take the next step

To learn more about IBM ECM solutions, please read our eBook: ibm.biz/BdrsAs

enChoice, Inc. provides enterprise content management software solutions that improve time-to-solution, the user experience, and backup and recovery service levels. enChoice software solutions are complemented by end-to-end ECM services and a unique “single point of contact” managed services offering. To find out more, please visit: www.enchoice.com