

Salt River Project powers operational efficiency with OpenText

Electric and water utility enhances speed, safety and compliance with new enterprise information management strategy

Salt River Project maintains a constant flow of information. Without direction, that flow puddled in outdated, disparate systems. That is, until SRP developed an effective content strategy that included OpenText solutions. Salt River Project (SRP) began directing water to Arizona farmlands more than 100 years ago. Today, the public utility company provides water and electricity to more than one million customers in the Phoenix metropolitan area and employs a workforce of more than 5,000.

With a long-standing history and a combined service area covering more than 3,200 square miles, SRP creates and collects vast amounts of information including procedural guidelines, equipment diagrams and more. “For the longest time, it was all on paper,” says Vince Bocchieri, ECM program manager for SRP. But in the 1980s, the company started accumulating large amounts of electronic content. “It got to the point where we were just storing that information on file shares and email systems and it was becoming a challenge to find that information and properly manage it.”

Inaccessible information caused risks and lengthy delays

SRP previously relied on a number of repositories in disparate legacy systems, some of which were out of support. With information everywhere, independent efforts sprouted to address contract management, document preservation or other efforts of limited scope.

It was a challenge to quickly find the right document in this environment. For example, an SRP director recalls spending hours looking for one document requested by an external agency. More importantly, inaccessible or outdated information can put worker safety at risk. “It is important that the most recent versions of drawings and operation procedures are available to our field crews to improve the safety of our employees,” says Bocchieri.

As a public utility operating in a heavily regulated industry and subject to numerous record requests, reliable data search and retrieval stands at the core of regulation compliance for SRP.

INDUSTRY

Public utility

CUSTOMER

Salt River Project

CHALLENGES

- Content managed in disparate legacy systems
- Labor-intensive compliance processes
- Outdated documents in the field pose employee risks

SOLUTIONS

- OpenText™ Content Suite
- OpenText™ Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions
- OpenText™ Media Management
- OpenText Professional Services

BENEFITS

- Operational efficiency
- Risk mitigation
- Improved customer service
- Reduced costs

“Whatever pain point we had within the organization, OpenText seemed to have a solution that allowed us to not only manage our information but extend it to our other business applications where we could add value to the organization. Now that we have OpenText solutions in place, it’s going to allow us to transform our organization for the future.”

VINCE BOCCIERI, ECM PROGRAM MANAGER, SRP

“We are required to make sure we are in compliance with our retention schedule and policies and that’s difficult and time-consuming to accomplish when you don’t have enabling technology to make it easier for employees. What we needed was an all-encompassing Enterprise Content Management program to ensure easy accessibility and the single source of truth for all documents,” says Bocchieri.

A true enterprise-wide information management strategy

SRP chose OpenText Enterprise Content Management (ECM) solutions based on past evaluations and industry leader recommendations from analysts at Gartner, Forrester Research and others. SRP and the ECM leader connected on the vital role of information in today’s content-driven environment. “It wasn’t just about a content management system, but really looking at how to add value to the business by integrating our unstructured content with other business applications such as SAP®, SuccessFactors® and more,” Bocchieri says. “The overall vision of OpenText to manage information and bring everything together matched our vision and it also had many of the solutions in place to help us get there.”

Active projects help streamline the efforts of close to 1,000 employees. When SRP reaches the full scope of its enterprise content system, all files will be moved from legacy repositories into OpenText™ Content Suite, with information retained according to schedules. SRP employees can now access the latest version of files immediately, leading to a number of process efficiencies.

Operating procedures

SRP set a workflow to guide review and approval of operating procedures, which are then centrally stored for easy access. “All the operators have the most accurate procedures. Having the most current version of a procedure allows our operators to manage our grid more effectively,” Bocchieri says.

Environmental services

SRP moved compliance documents into Content Suite with forms and search tools. The controlled environment ensures files are protected and easy to supply at a moment’s notice.

Water rights

Some files span a timeline reaching far into the past and into the future. SRP handles water rights documents from more than 100 years ago; it must preserve the files to show who has first right of water in the territory. “Protecting the water rights of our shareholder is a crucial function for SRP and it’s important that these documents are securely stored and managed,” says Bocchieri. “With OpenText, information that used to drown in file shares is now secure and ‘on tap.’ The ECM program is preparing SRP to manage all of its information today and into the future.”

Cartographic GIS services

Other unique documents, including large maps, were previously scattered across multiple locations. Now, GIS personnel are avid ECM fans: “They are very pleased with the solution, and it’s making them more efficient in their day-to-day operations,” says Bocchieri.

Media collaboration

SRP manages advertising in-house and previously, its marketing professionals felt disconnected from each other, and the content they produced landed in silos. In response, SRP is implementing OpenText™ Media Management, a consolidated asset library for commercials, brochures and other rich media produced in SRP’s print and creative shops and accessible to marketing, customer service and other departments.

“We’re brokering a collaboration effort between those organizations and looking at how they work together to improve their business processes,” says Bocchieri. “We’re automating workflows between those groups so that the content being created is accessible to the other organizations to use—making everyone more effective.”



ECM business value

Surveying the progress and potential of its program thus far, Bocchieri and others at SRP move forward with fortitude. “By pursuing best practices in content management and implementing leading industry technology solutions like OpenText, SRP will recognize business value and mitigate risk,” he says.

In addition to reducing risk and enhancing safety, SRP reports additional benefits as it continues its ECM journey:

Reduced costs

By finding files immediately, employees save at least an hour every week and redirect that time to other tasks, according to a SRP director. While a conservative estimate, the hours quickly add up when accounting for the thousands of employees that will leverage OpenText. In addition, Bocchieri estimates cost-savings through more efficient search and enhanced record capabilities.

SRP also reduces maintenance and IT support expenditures through the decommissioning of legacy systems after migration to Content Suite.

Improved service

Though valuable cost-savings remain secondary to SRP’s mission for exceptional customer service. For multiple consecutive years, the water and electric utility earned top customer service awards. As such, “any opportunity we have to improve how we provide service to our customers is important to us,” says Bocchieri.

Upon integration of Content Suite and SRP’s customer information system, call center agents will receive all correspondence associated with a customer on the spot. “They can more easily answer the questions a customer has, reducing the number of callbacks that we have to perform and improving our customer service levels by using Content Suite,” says Bocchieri.

Teamwork and future plans

To realize its ECM vision, SRP worked closely with OpenText Professional Services. Design and deployment became a united effort, according to Bocchieri: “They’re actually a part of our team. It’s not like it’s the OpenText and SRP teams. We’re one team and it’s been a really good working relationship.”

In time, SRP expects to connect its SAP environment with Content Suite and expand the repository to include additional types of documents such as purchase orders and contracts. No matter the future challenge or need, Bocchieri and his team express confidence in its ECM strategy powered by OpenText.

“Whatever pain point we had within the organization, OpenText seemed to have a solution that allowed us to not only manage our information but extend it to our other business applications where we could add value to the organization,” he says. “Now that we have OpenText solutions in place, it’s going to allow us to transform our organization for the future.”

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