

## Case Study

### GSFC deploys a document management solution

*The fertilisers and chemicals manufacturer is using document management to good effect, finds **Chirasrota Jena**.*

Gujarat State Fertilizers and Chemicals Limited (GSFC) is a well-known government sector enterprise and is uniquely positioned as a multi-location, multi-plant, multi-services and multi-crore entity. The company has become a leading fertilisers and chemicals manufacturer, something it has achieved through constant technological development, innovation and customer satisfaction. Along the way, GSFC implemented a document management solution (DMS) from **Newgen Software Technologies**.

#### Cumbersome beginnings

Prior to the implementation of the DMS from **Newgen**, all the proposals and approvals for management consideration were routed through paper files containing proposals, supporting documents, catalogues and offers. The files containing these documents were physically gathered and manually transported from one officer's to another officer's desk for clearance and endorsement.

The manual process was prevalent from the inception of the company. This process worked fine as long as the organisation was small. However, with the expansion of operations, it began facing problems such as tedious and cumbersome file management, untraceable files, and high turn-around times. Informs Ashok Patel, DGM, Systems, GSFC, "The manual system for document handling involved the physical management of documents. If a file had to be approved by an officer, all the associated documents containing comments and remarks from other officers (who had forwarded the file) also needed to be taken to the officer. File handling was thus extremely cumbersome, and there was always the risk of loss of documents during transportation, including documents which might be vital to the file. Lots of effort was needed to search and compile all the relevant information for any particular file."

The DMS at GSFC	
Application Server :	Apache
Database :	Oracle 9i
Users :	More than 200
Files processed so far :	About 30,000

#### Automated system

Keeping all these problems in mind, GSFC realised that only an automated system could resolve its problems. However, there was one big hurdle to cross: users at both the senior and junior level had strong apprehensions regarding the implementation of a solution which would be totally automated. They feared the new system would be too complex to understand and operate, while they were all familiar with the manual system in spite of it being tedious.

Adds Patel, "Our management services division (MSD) collaborated with three other departments—materials management, marketing and finance. We conducted a survey of the practices and procedures of various DMS' used in different private and public sector organisations. After the survey, it was concluded that a workflow-based DMS was needed to address the prevailing problems. We wanted the Indian version of a solution that was appropriate for our typical working environment and suited our requirements."

#### The solution they chose

The chosen **Newgen** solution consisted of OmniDocs for enterprise wide document management.



"Newgen rendered constant support through training and making sure the solution was readily acceptable to users. The system totally eliminated the manual process in three months"

- Diwakar Nigam  
Managing Director  
Newgen Software Technologies

The materials management, marketing and finance departments were selected for the pilot project, with the MSD acting as the system implementer and integrator. Users in these departments were provided rights as per hierarchical position. Group leaders were identified for each department, and they were given full rights by the system administrator to allocate rights to users in their respective departments.

Says Diwakar Nigam, Managing Director of **Newgen Software**, "We had actively participated in making available the detailed documentation, both in the form of manuals and guides as well as online help. MSD also prepared customised manuals for the users to quickly manage their functions." The DMS solution from **Newgen** is a platform-independent application and has been implemented using Apache Application Server and Oracle 9i as back-end database. A parallel set-up is also maintained to handle any contingency. In case of an emergency, the entire set-up can be quickly switched to this parallel set-up, using which users can resume their operations with minimal loss of data. This parallel set-up is also used as a testing platform for adding new capabilities to the system; it is done by testing the new functionalities on the parallel set-up before implementing it on the live set-up.

**Newgen** has also provided training on the DMS. The training was on detailed demonstrations and hands-on practice for the creation of electronic files, scanning and uploading of documents, rights-allocation, and management and handling of all documents in the workflow. According to Nigam, "**Newgen** rendered constant support through training and making sure the solution was readily acceptable to users. The system was implemented and totally eliminated the manual process in three months."

System acceptance by users was one of the potential problem areas that could thwart a successful implementation. But OmniDocs was seamlessly integrated with the legacy system, and offers the MS Office and Outlook Express type of messaging system and document handling mechanism, thereby making it user-friendly.

### Proof of the pudding

Within three months GSFC had earned its return on investment. The solution had been able to efficiently use existing resources, improve the productivity of employees, and ensure better security through more granular control for users at various hierarchical levels. Process standardisation and simplification was achieved through fixed methods of file uploading, naming conventions for files and folders, and an interactive interface that provided a clear-cut snapshot. Discloses Patel, "Our top executives at the head-office in Baroda and at the two manufacturing facilities located in Jamnagar and Kosamba are using the solution. After the implementation about 30,000 files have been processed since 2004. The total cost involved in the implementation process was around Rs 20 lakh, which includes both software and hardware expenses. More than 200 executives are using the solution."

Because of the parallel system, the DMS is better prepared for disasters than the manual system. The solution has also ushered in a simple and transparent method of document handling with total accountability for the employees responsible for individual stages of file movement and approval.

Details Patel: "Every department independently sends their proposals and approvals along with notes, comments and annotations, electronically, through the Web browser-based facility. This is done using a flexible path/route for point-to-point delivery and instant decision-making. Users are informed about a pending file/document request for their action, just like mail in the inbox. OmniDocs routes the documents to intended users and stores the current status of the document for quick and easy tracking. Now management personnel are getting all information about pending proposals and the points of delay in the workflow by clicking a few buttons."