CITY COUNCIL OPTIMISES FOREIGNERS' REGISTRATION OFFICE ADMINISTRATION WITH DIGITAL PROCESSES

"Our Iron Mountain solution was less expensive than purchasing new carousels and setting up additional office space. And we've now got all the productivity and collaboration benefits of digital workflows."

Christian Dolle, Project Leader, Stadtverwaltung Schwäbisch Gmünd

CHALLENGE

With over 11,000 brief cases stored in ageing carousel units, the Foreigners' Registration Office in Schwäbisch Gmünd was running out of space while wasting unnecessary time and effort processing rising immigration cases.

SOLUTION

Iron Mountain® Backfile Scanning provided a fast, efficient, and data protection (GDPR) compliant process, converting legacy paper files and handwritten notes into digital records for uploading via SFTP to the council's document management system.

RESULTS

Staff work more efficiently and respond quicker to court and agency requests. There's also less risk of essential documents getting lost or mislaid. Other benefits include space savings, lower storage costs and continuous access to files for remote workers.

1.1 million
digital images produced

€120,000 saved
avoiding unnecessary purchases

External archiving
saves space and costs

Faster processing
of inquiries

IRON MOUNTAIN®

CHALLENGE SOLUTION RESULTS

SIMPLIFYING PRESSURED OFFICE PROCESSES

Christian Dolle, Project Leader, Stadtverwaltung Schwäbisch Gmünd

SPRAWLING HARD-TO-MANAGE ARCHIVE

Outdated paper-based work practices

Set in the picturesque foothills of the Swabian Alb and Dreikaiserberge mountains, the town of Schwäbisch Gmünd is home to around 60,000 people. The city council had been moving towards digital public services and e-government processes. Due to the influx of refugees, the Foreigners' Registration Office for Immigration had come under particular pressure and thus moved into the spotlight.

"Records management became increasingly challenging at the Foreigners' Registration Office," says Project Leader, Christian Dolle. "There were over 11,000 paper files kept in carousel storage units, which were timeworn and beyond repair. Fast running out of room, we had to install temporary racks taking up more and more office space."

Solid commercial case

Having recently introduced a document management system and integrated it with LaDiVA, a programme that is used by other German immigration authorities, the council seized the opportunity to move to digital records. The decision made sound financial sense too. "Purchasing three new storage carousels would have cost about €120,000 and we would still be left with the same administration and space problems," adds Dolle.

11,000+ files held in ageing carousel storage units

IRON MOUNTAIN®

CHALLENGE   SOLUTION   RESULTS

INTEGRATED STORAGE AND SCANNING MODEL

"Even scribbled remarks on Post-it notes were scanned manually and added to the record. Likewise, passports had to be photocopied in colour and integrated with the original file before imaging."

Christian Dolle, Project Leader, Stadtverwaltung Schwäbisch Gmünd

ENSURING INFORMATION IS HANDLED SENSITIVELY

Full secure chain of custody

Iron Mountain® was appointed following a public tender. "Iron Mountain met all our requirements and made the economically most favourable offer," says Dolle.

Blending off-site records management and imaging, the Iron Mountain Backfile Scanning service provides full secure chain of custody through pre-collection, transportation, digitising and data protection (GDPR) compliant shredding. In coordination with the Foreigners' Registration Office, specialists divided the archive into batches. The files were then scanned in Iron Mountain's high-security archive.

Thoroughness and accuracy reigns

Attention to detail was important throughout. Paperclips and staples were removed, creased pages flattened, and page tears glued together. "Even scribbled remarks on Post-it notes were scanned manually and added to the record," recalls Dolle. "Likewise, passports had to be photocopied in colour and integrated with the original file before scanning."

In total, over 1.1 million digital images were processed and made available via SFTP for upload to the council's document management system. Once scanned the files are held by Iron Mountain in storage for one year, after which they are securely and in compliance with data protection destroyed. The only paper records now held onsite by the City Council are passports and official files like naturalisation documents.

Over 1.1 million scanned images produced and securely uploaded

IMPROVED RESPONSE WITH INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATION

"Now, our staff access digital images immediately from their desktops, saving time and manpower. We're able to respond to requests much faster. Plus, there's less risk of files getting misfiled or going missing."

Christian Dolle, Project Leader, Stadtverwaltung Schwäbisch Gmünd

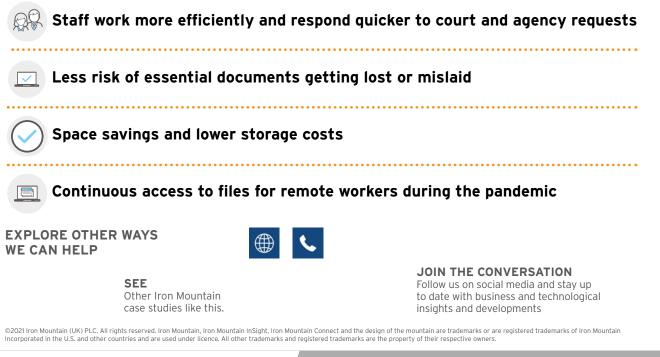## Faster processing and sharing of information

People naturally move around. Each time council staff had to copy and ship documents to the Foreigners' Registration Office of the new residence. This process took just as long for court cases and asylum applications.

"Courts only accept digital records, so we used to have to scan entire files," says Dolle. "This generated lots of unnecessary work, especially for our trainees.. Now, staff access digital images immediately with a click of their mouse. Staff in the public access office can retrieve the digital documents at their desktops, saving time and manpower. We're able to respond to requests much faster. Plus, there's less risk of files getting misfiled or going missing."

Employee and workplace benefits

Floor space used for old carousel units and racks has been reclaimed for three extra desks. "Before, all the tables in the open plan office for public access were covered with files and it looked really chaotic," says Dolle. "Now, it looks like an exhibition room." Staff also enjoy less clutter and cleaner offices. Every workplace is equipped with a scanner, making it easy to upload documents directly to the system and offer a better service to clients when they visit.

The employees of the immigration office can work efficiently from home if required. "The Iron Mountain solution was less expensive than purchasing new carousels and setting up additional office space," concludes Dolle. "And we've now got the productivity and collaboration benefits of digital workflows."

Staff work more efficiently and respond quicker to court and agency requests

Less risk of essential documents getting lost or mislaid

Space savings and lower storage costs

Continuous access to files for remote workers during the pandemic

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