

# Secretary of State Corporations Division Implements Innovative Web Filing and Electronic Workflow



## Washington Secretary of State

### ORGANIZATION

Washington Secretary of State  
Corporations Division  
www.secstate.wa.gov

### INDUSTRY

State Government  
Solution  
› Archive and Document Management System  
› Web Filing and Electronic Workflow

### CHALLENGE

- › 4 - 6 weeks wait time to complete business transactions
- › Filing delays dissatisfy customers
- › Process 60,000 new formation filings yearly
- › File storage was limited
- › Entirely manual application process
- › New Domestic Partnership Workflow needed in a short time frame
- › Technology upgrades necessary to keep system up to date

### KEY BENEFITS

- › More efficient service
- › Paperless office
- › Online corporate formation filings
- › To streamline corporate renewals, ECM system communicates with Department of Licensing system
- › Customers have 24-7 access to the system
- › Reduced human errors
- › Eliminated backlog of applications
- › Technology allowed timely enablement of Domestic Partnerships workflow to meet state deadline
- › Oracle IPM system upgraded to current version

24-7 ACCESS AND IMPROVED TURNAROUND OF REGISTRATIONS AND RENEWALS THROUGH ONLINE FILING HAS RECEIVED AN OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM CUSTOMERS WHO HAVE UTILIZED THE SYSTEM.

Located in Olympia, the Corporations Division at the Washington Secretary of State is responsible for registering a number of business related entities. Each year, there are approximately 60,000 new entity filings for profit and non-profit corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships and limited liability companies.

### Critical Problems to Overcome

In 2003, the Corporations Division faced critical problems with the hard copy paper application process that was in place.

- › They were receiving an increasing number of complaints about filing delays and were routinely asked when online filing options would become available
- › Customers waited 4-6 weeks to file new corporations or update entities' records
- › Storage needed for 300,000 active paper records was overwhelming available space
- › The filing process was entirely manual, resulting in delays and extensive training
- › Tracking processing productivity was difficult and cumbersome

### e-Government Streamlines Business Filings

To solve these problems, the Secretary of State partnered with ImageSource® to streamline and optimize their work processes for managing documents related to registering new corporations and companies in Washington State.

Working hand-in-hand to develop a progressive, state-of-the-art imaging, electronic workflow and Web filing solution, an e-government initiative was launched

to make the way the agency managed business filings more efficient.

ImageSource developed a system that touched critical parts of the Division's internal and external business processes. The solution utilized Oracle Image Process Management (IPM) software for content storage, retrieval and workflow and Kofax® Ascent Capture for image scanning and data validation.

Images of incoming, hard copy documents are captured in the mail room, then electronically routed based on priority and document type. The documents follow a customized workflow process in which applications are electronically routed to knowledge workers, preventing files from being lost or misplaced, as they had in the manual process.

To allow corporations to file online, ten custom ASP Web forms were developed by ImageSource utilizing an XML data schema. The forms are automatically uploaded to the system and routed to incoming workflow queues for processing.



### Access to the System 24 Hours a Day

The solution gives customers 24-7 access to their documents throughout the process. Additionally, it reduces the

number of human errors and allows customers to save an incomplete application online for up to 60 days to complete at a later time. The process streamlined the application process for individual constituents and for attorneys who file on their behalf.

"Prior to the online application process, you had to draft a hard copy of Articles of Incorporation. It took awhile. It was a hassle. You had to drive downtown if they wanted to do it right away," reflects Alan Wertjes, Wertjes Law Group, located in Olympia, Washington. "Using the online process, with a few clicks of the mouse, you're at the screen you need. You can plug in the information and have a Limited Liability Company formed within a matter of hours. The Applications process is quick, easy and accurate."

The solutions implemented allows employees to quickly access information that is critical to their work. As a result, the Secretary of State was able to increase productivity, even with increasing volumes and the addition of new services. In addition to new filings, the system is utilized for hundreds of thousands of corporation maintenance filings annually, including annual reports, dissolutions, reinstatements and amendments.

## THE INNOVATIVE SOLUTION HELPED THE DIVISION MOVE ONE STEP CLOSER TO A PAPERLESS OFFICE AND SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE.

### Nationally Recognized

In May of 2005, the Secretary of State and ImageSource were awarded the Channel Connection Award by Business Solutions magazine. The Award recognizes outstanding installations that demonstrate integration complexity and deliver ROI, in this case for creating an innovative solution that helped the division move one step closer to a paperless office and significantly improve customer service.

### Domestic Partnerships Add Workflow

On April 21, 2007, the State Registered Domestic Partnerships (SRDP) was signed into Washington law. The new law, which took effect on July 22, 2007, would require all couples who

wished to register as SRDPs to file with the Secretary of State. With only three months to develop a business process, ImageSource and the Corporations Division quickly developed a workflow through Oracle IPM to assist the State in effectively processing the multitude of applications that would soon hit. The Secretary of State began issuing registrations on July 23, 2007, the first business day after the law took effect.

"We had a short turnaround time from the time the bill was passed and when we had to implement it," said Pamela Floyd, Director of the Corporations and Charities Division for the Secretary of State. "ImageSource was extremely responsive and efficient in building the workflow process."

### A More Efficient System

As part of a recent evaluation, the Secretary of State looked at a variety of options to bring their system up to current standards. The Corporations Division again partnered with ImageSource to upgrade Oracle IPM, which was cost-effective and allowed them to meet new challenges. The upgrade greatly improved the stability of the system so they now rarely experience down time.

### The Vision for the Future

As part of the upgrade process, ImageSource provided the Secretary of State's IT department with the software source code, which allowed them more control over the system. With the success of Web filings for new corporations—42 percent of new formations were filed online in 2008—the Secretary of State would like to offer Web filing for Renewals, Charities, Domestic Partnerships and all other entities. They also strive to continually increase efficiencies by streamlining more processes through Oracle IPM.

In order to help the Secretary of State utilize their IT Department to expand the system themselves, ImageSource has plans to impart the knowledge and expertise needed to move the system forward.

"My experiences with ImageSource have been very positive. They completed all phases of the upgrade on time," said Pamela Floyd. "It has allowed us to offer services to the public without compromise."

## Technology



### LINX IMPORT

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