

# WHY GOING PAPERLESS IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR YOUR SALES AND BACK OFFICE PROCESSES



***By now, you must have heard that from March 31st, 2014 costs for mailing letters in Canada have risen to 1USD. So this means that cost of mailing a letter rises by 35%.***

Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) announces postal price hike in Canada last week. Which means the cost of mailing any first-class letter in Canada will go up by 35 percent and the prices of stamps will be 85 cents from 63 cents. In case you are buying stamps in a bulk quantity then it will cost you 1 USD for any single first-class stamp. However, large volume mailer senders will have to pay 69-70 cents for each stamp.

***98% of small & medium-sized businesses mainly depend on Canada Post each month!!***

Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) says that, hike in the prices will affect the almost 98 percent of the small firms that send Letters or mails every month. The price hike taking effect soon next week might do more harm than just good to corporations and firms. It might push businesses towards the web world and away from the traditional mail system.

**Are you ready for the change?? What steps are you considering to decrease your dependence on letter-mails?**

Volume has declined and so they have raised the prices in order to compensate however this will further reduce the demand resulting in more volume decline. At the same time, the service quality has kept going down year by year. People and organization suffer huge losses due to mails being delivered late or to wrong mailboxes.

Strange but true that many firms in Canada still continue to use letter mails as a vital part of daily operations. It's a tough time for people in Canada to manage their business without having a reasonably priced mailing service. So are the Canadian small firms and businesses ready to witness their mailing costs going up, despite the measures to soften this impact announced by Canada Post 2 weeks ago? This is a **BIG QUESTION**, which needs an answer as well as a solution!

***So where to go from here??***

Though the future can't be predicted, but the sudden rise in the postage rates may backfire and may create reasons for businesses in Canada to shift from sending mails to search other methods.

## **Should Your Business in Canada Go Paperless?**

If you are running a business, it can be somewhat complicated to justify this change. “Don’t fix what isn’t broken” is a slogan that suits business owners who have been using old school processes despite the recent technological advancements. However, familiarizing yourself to the changing technological market and utilizing new assets is very important for your business survival after Canada’s postal price hike. So the most potent way to keep swiftness in your organization is simply to go paperless in the year 2014.

### **Need for going paperless! Some advantages!!!**

Reasons for you to go paperless this year are –easy finding and sharing of documents, creating space in your workplace or saving some trees. Whatever the reasons be, you will find many advantages of going paperless. Following are the benefits of using a paperless office –

#### ***Improved Efficiency & Productivity-***

In businesses, time is money. So paperless solutions can help you save time on some more productive ventures. If you choose a right platform then your business management team can reap great benefits of an improved organization.

#### ***Less Errors = Happy Customers-***

Other than saving time the most essential aspect of any paperless office is less error. Lots of information and databases can be easily backed up and this helps to eliminate errors and loss of records. Therefore, the result of opting for paperless systems is less confusion, higher confidence in handle customer requests and a smoother working experience.

#### ***A Better & Responsive Customer Service-***

This is the “Big Data” age and its capability cannot be under-stated. Expectations of customer keep rising daily, and firms/businesses always hunt for improved ways to fulfill their needs without the obnoxious undertaking of asking them over and over again. So analyzing their orders, company payroll and employee schedules you can streamline your operations of your business in a better way and deliver a personalized product/service, without any hassle and error.

Handling paper records for urgent requests can fall through the cracks because these records are kept in filing cabinets so they cannot be brought to the staff member’s attention without human acknowledgement. Thus, paperless assists in alleviating worker’s mental burden and dissatisfied customer’s pain. Through workflow systems, automated alerts and better monitoring of records, paperless solution systems give an energetic look at your customer base and provide metrics as well as awareness that can be powered into improvement.

#### ***Paper Costs Even More to Maintain-***

Contrary to a common belief, pricey computer systems and software solutions are in fact less expensive to maintain as compared to paper records. Paper records require storage in any physical location like cabinets or boxes which consume a large amount of store space. Paperless

solutions take all such head ache and compress it into one single server, dropping overheads from property costs.

Other than this paper checks, schedules, requests and training, all these can be lost in a busy working day. Paperless solutions provide accurate as well as collaborative environments that can alleviate such burdens and lead to happy business owners and workers.

### *Going Paperless is Secure-*

Even with “indestructible”, fireproof and locking file cabinets; paperless back office provides a much better secure solution for office record keeping. Firstly, paperless back office solutions can be easily backed up to any de-localized location, so this means that fire or flood waters cannot do anything to compromise the reliability of your important data.

Secondly, paperless solutions make use of encryption that captures sensitive information in an unreadable configure, making data theft unsuccessful at the best. So if your organization is still functioning with paper, then make 2014, the year of your switch. Your staff, costs, products/services and customers will thank you for this change.

### *Security-*

Your documents in a locked file cabinet is still vulnerable to thefts, however in a paperless back office, you are able to add different security levels to keep unauthorized intrusions. A high-quality security system allows you to track history to see who has accessed the document and when.

### *Process Consistency-*

Many companies have to comply with the legislation which requires certain processes or procedures in record keeping. Such as financial services have to show their information is unaltered to act in accordance with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act; medical practices should comply with HIPAA for proving that their records are secure from inquisitive eyes. However, paperless programs can assist you establish stern guidelines and procedures to ensure conformity during an audit.

### *Integration-*

Most of the back office paperless software programs that are available integrate with other applications for instance those offered by Microsoft Office for seamless business procedures. So you can easily combine document management with several other programs that you already use to do your daily business. Integrating saves time and also aids in efficiency as well as productivity of your business.



## **Why going paperless with ERP systems is a best choice for Canadian Companies?**

As the demand for accountability, transparency and accuracy in accounting has increased in the past few years, so has requirement for accounting automation technology to address such challenges. Just by using a basic functionality of any ERP system you can eliminate all the paper processes that are used in your business accounting.

Now ledgers, journals and AP/AR can be filed as well as stored electronically. Month end and year ending closing procedures can also be done within these ERP systems, conclusively eliminating numerous hours of your company's manpower.

Even payroll has become automated with the ERP systems which include electronic paystubs which are now e-mailed to the employees on direct deposits instead of printing paper paystubs.

Some ERP software can entirely automate invoicing as well as purchase orders - incoming and outgoing both - resulting in elimination any or all paper usage. Integrated CRM software allows you to attach all relevant documents and contracts to a specific account card.

Moreover, you can integrate your e-mail into various CRM systems, facilitating you to store e-mails along with their related accounts. Most of the business organizations know that an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system contains all the paperless capabilities that they require, however they need to know the procedure of using it effectively.

In fact, ERP systems such as Sage 100 ERP (formerly Sage ERP MAS 90 & Sage ERP MAS 200) include several features which can help your business office go paperless, such as:

- **Journals & Registers**
- **Period-End Processing**
- **Job Cost Invoices**
- **Purchase Orders**
- **Sales Orders and Sales Order Invoices**
- **Report Viewer**
- **Payroll Direct Deposit Stubs**
- **Accounts Receivables**
- **Electronic Forms Delivery**

By activating ERP systems in your office you can start taking advantage of many great features for example converting documents into PDF to store them in your system. So then it will be very easy for you to locate documents as well as share them with any employee or customer, just by sharing electronically. Now no need for copying, faxing or scanning!

Though ERP software cannot entirely eliminate the use of all paper in your back office, but it can drastically reduce the overheads of your company and improve work efficiency at the same time. This is indeed a positive impact on our environment which we cannot be understate either.

## **SAGE ERP 300-**

Sage 300 ERP is a comprehensive integrated business management system that provides CRM, financials, operations as well as business intelligence. Countless customers across the globe use Sage 300 ERP for having an automatic workflow and interconnected processes from other areas of their business.

### **Benefits -**

- History of serving small to mid-sized businesses.
- Quickly address new technologies & business needs
- Best 3rd third party product with more than 400 Sage development partners' worldwide
- Out-of-the-box integration of Sage 300 ERP & Sage CRM giving a real-time 360° view of a business.
- Easily bring operations of your front office and back office into an alignment.

### **Eight essential capabilities of Sage 300 ERP**

Streamline your business processes and tie them together with the help of Sage 300 ERP's far-reaching capabilities.

- Accounting & finance
- Purchasing management
- Business intelligence & reporting
- Sales management
- Inventory & warehouse management
- Customer management
- Time & project management
- 3rd party software integration

### **What can you add to SAGE ERP 300 to enable you to use less paper and be more efficient and use less postage?**

#### ***Sage 300 printboss-***

Printboss is software developed by Wellsprings. It prints onto blank check stock, adds security protected signature, restricts personnel who can print checks and print the amount that has been stipulate and creates a creative stamp that identifies the person who printed the check. Printboss when integrated with Sage ERP can automate check accounting by printing various checks that the ERP system feeds into it thus automating the whole process and reducing cost and efficiency.

### ***SAGE 300 mobile sales-***

Various mobile applications were released by Sage 300 in 2013 at Sage summit. One of them was Mobile sales. Sage mobile sales is an iPad application which allows the sales people to show the product to customers from their iPads, various other functions like taking order, creating a quote, check availability and acceptance of payment can be done by the sales person on the spot from his iPad through the Sage 300 mobile sales. The mobile sales application is synchronized with Sage Data cloud which in turn is connected to the ERP that allows various functions to be coordinated and seamless transfer of data online without the need for any kind of paperwork.

### ***Sage mobile payment-***

Sage billing and payments is a mobile/web application that can be downloaded and used on mobile devices. The billing and payment application connects to the ERP system and allows the customers to pay via the internet. The functioning is simple and highly customizable. Basically the application allows the business owner to e-mail invoices to customers who can then follow the provided the provided link and pay via credit card. The whole process can be automated and customized to suit requirements of the Business owner.

This is not an installed software application but rather a web based service from Sage, the reason is because automated emails are often labeled as spam and customization to invoices and receipts in ERP is hard. Also many ERP systems cannot collect payment via card out of e-mail. The application makes the process of collecting payment efficient and painless.

## **EDI products**

EDI stands for Electronic Data Interchange. Usually when two different companies interchange information the process is usually this: the data from one company is taken then it passes through various copy machines and finally is manually entered into the receiving party's system. This process usually involves several photocopies, postal correspondence and various intermediate services especially if the two companies have different accounting or business practices. The whole process takes huge amount of paperwork, is slow, inefficient and potentially inaccurate.

EDI provides a common language to the systems of the two computer based business system. The EDI is a collection of numbers and alphabets (standardize in North America as ANSI X12) which have standard meanings and can be interchanged by various businesses computers directly. Therefore EDI is a system for exchanging business documents (like invoices) to external entities without having to translate or fear that anything might be misunderstood.

EDI drastically takes away the need for paper copies or inaccuracies that might occur while transferring data and at the same time eliminating the need for manual data entry thus reducing cost and increasing efficiency.

### *E-Commerce web stores and service providers-*

In simple terms it is the buying and selling of products via the internet. The obvious benefits for the seller is that the seller is no longer constrained by his geographical location and can now access a global customer base while at the same time reducing the cost of having a physical store with recurring expenditures like rent, electricity etc.

E commerce integrates various other systems like EDI and ERP to function. Some of the biggest e-commerce stores are Amazon, e-bay and Alibaba. These web stores facilitate the transfer of various data to ease their business transactions. The whole process is paperless, extremely fast and unique; in fact the selling company does not need to have a physical presence. The e-commerce web stores charge fees on every product sold and money transaction charges are collected by service providers like Paypal.

### **Why would using an ecommerce web store reduce your paper and postage?**

In your fast paced business life, you need tools that are designed to merge your diverse business activities. These tools are so flexible that they allow you to have all the information that you need for making quick and informed decisions. A smarter way to do business is to opt for an ecommerce web store with ERP system integration because this will greatly help you reduce your postage and paper costs.

Save on your paper and postage expenses as you can send customer electronic forms via emails. Dramatically cut-down the need of stuffing envelopes and stocking up on postage every billing period. You can save approximately \$1 on each document by switching electronic distribution. Everyone is looking to save on paper and postage in Canada, and the easiest way is to reduce your postage costs. With most of the modern day ecommerce web store and its integration with other accounting software, electronically you can send out invoices as well as statements to your customers rather than posting them. The expense on printing and mailing paper catalogues via post is reduced as you can email your brochures and catalogues to your customers. Create online coupons and send them via emails to your prospects/customers.

You can also do mass communication with your customers, for example, you can send bulk emails to customers, which is easier and affordable than doing 100-150 direct mailings.

### *EFT for AP and AR-*

The abbreviations stand for Electronic Fund transfer, Account payable and Account Receivable respectively. EFT is the transfer of money from one account to another via computer based systems like payment through credit cards and electronic debit of money. EFT can be used by business to clear their financial liabilities like AP which are calculated as liabilities in account ledgers, there is sufficient evidence of the transaction and takes away the need to post check, money-orders or other paper based money transactions.

Similarly the business can receive payments(AR) through EFT and make the whole process paperless, fast and takes away the need to keep physical hard copies of various transactions as EFT's would be recorded in the database.

### *Document Management Systems-*

These are computer systems used to track and store electronic documents. The electronic storage and management of data gives the following benefits: eliminates paper costs and cost of maintenance due to deterioration of paper quality, removes the need for physical storage of huge amounts of papers, the data is much more easily accessible and can be accessed from anywhere eliminating the need to post the documents or make photocopies. Relevant information can be searched much more easily.

There are various Document Management Systems like Alfresco, DocPoint, Docuware, Livelink, Hummingbird DM, etc. who provide Document Management Services.

### **CONCLUSION-**

Paperless back office is an environment where you can eliminate or greatly reduce the use of paper. And this is can be done by converting documents and other communication methods into digital form. Though, a 100% paperless back office is unattainable, however some decisive steps can dramatically reduce the use of paper. **“Going paperless”** actually saves lot of money, boosts productivity, saves space, makes documentation as well as information sharing faster, keeps information secure and makes an eco-friendly back office.

**Empower your business, Go Paperless in your Back office!**