

The Carroll Cleaning Company, founded in 1987, is a family-run business based in the north of England. It provides a wide variety of cleaning services ranging from general office cleaning to specialised services such as IT equipment and textiles. A staff of over 5000 cleaners is co-ordinated by a central administration team at the company's Head Office near Halifax, West Yorkshire.

Nick Carroll, the company's Managing Director, approached us in 2003 because he realised that the amount of paperwork involved with processing the time sheets sent in by each individual cleaner for payroll purposes was vast and the storage space required was increasing by the day. In addition, the manual process of storing and retrieving information was extremely inefficient and time consuming. Lots of time was being wasted whilst staff searched through filing cabinets to retrieve timesheets when queries arose. When a call came in from a cleaner, usually from home, the staff would have to ring the cleaner back, at the company's expense, once they had manually retrieved the information. He wanted to move towards an electronic storage and retrieval system so that everything would be available at the touch of a button and save space.

The first stage in providing a suitable solution for the Carroll Cleaning Company involved spending a considerable amount of time in consultation with Mr Carroll and his staff. Firstly, we needed to establish the volume of scanning that would be carried out on a regular basis and the nature of the original documents. Then, it was important to find out more about the whole office environment - how much space was available and where would be the best location for a scanning device to ensure ease of access for the staff who would be using it. Finally, and crucially, we had to establish appropriate filing criteria for the scanned images so individual documents could be easily identified and retrieved from the database

Once we had completed our investigations, the solution we provided was a single space-saving 22-page per minute Ricoh Multifunctional Printer (MFP) that would combine the functionality of separate copiers, printers and scanners. The MFP was configured with an automatic document feeder and duplex unit, thus allowing users to scan batches of up to 50 documents through the device in a single operation, scanning both sides at the same time if necessary. We also supplied INVU document management software to enable staff to easily archive and retrieve the scanned images. Zonal OCR and the auto-indexing feature available within Invu allowed the process to be fully automated - the software recognises entries within pre-specified areas of the form, such as time sheet number, using this as the filing reference to file it away automatically without the requirement for manual intervention. A full installation and training timetable was set up around Carroll Cleaning's requirements.

The solution proved to be an instant hit with the payroll staff. Instead of taking details of a query, going off to find the paperwork and then phoning back with an answer, they were now able to search the electronic database for documents relating to an individual employee and a particular payroll, view the images on screen and provide the answer whilst their caller was still on the line. The cleaners also received an enhanced service as they were not left waiting for their query to be answered.

When other departments at Head Office viewed what could be achieved, they began to find additional uses for the scan and archive facility, and so its popularity grew. For example, the sales department now scan, archive and index all their customer quotes, so that if a customer phones in for further information, the relevant quote can be retrieved by searching under the customer's name.

We kept in close contact with Mr Carroll, monitoring and assisting with the developments taking place within the office. Recently, due to the increased volumes of scanning undertaken, the MFP was so heavily used that staff were queuing to use it as it was in constant use. After further consultation, we therefore supplied an additional dedicated scanner so that the workload can be spread across both devices. This latest device offers a faster scan speed of up to 40 pages per minute to process the increased number of documents in a shorter time, and a higher capacity 150-sheet document feeder to allow documents to be scanned in larger batches.

Our involvement with Mr Carroll and the Carroll Cleaning Company does not end here. We are committed to continuing to support the solution we have provided and by working together to ensure that whatever developments the future might hold, the document management facilities will continue to keep pace and meet all their requirements.

Find out how IOT plc can help your business. Call: 01924 823 455 or Email: enquiries@iotplc.com



IOT Plc incorporating Eurocopy

IOT plc · Northern House · Moor Knoll Lane
East Ardsley · Wakefield · WF3 2EE
Tel: 01924 823 455 · Fax: 01924 820 433
Email: enquiries@iotplc.com

