

Managing Transitions

Increasing Operational Efficiencies Before, During and After a Buyout

Introduction

Equity Office Properties LLP (EOP) owns and operates a national portfolio of premier office buildings in major metropolitan markets across the country. Since 2006, Millennia Group has been working with EOP as an information management partner, building a solid communications infrastructure within the organization. Millennia's advanced data management solutions have facilitated EOP through major organizational transitions, from significant shifts in the market to significant shifts within the operations of the company. Most recently, EOP was transformed through one of the largest private buy-outs in real estate history, and Millennia was a valued partner throughout this transition.

Background

In 2006, EOP was the largest office real estate investment trust company in the country. In February 2007, the company was acquired by The Blackstone Group, one of the world's premier private investment and advisory firms. Prior to the merger, EOP utilized Millennia Group's managed imaging services to perform the imaging and indexing of documents into their own document management system, supporting business partners, buyers, employees and regulators. During and after the merger, when information needs shifted, Millennia Group was once again retained as a partner to architect a solution that would meet the data management needs of the new organization.

Challenges

Millennia's first challenge was getting documents imaged and into the business workflow. The second challenge, post acquisition, was to create a comprehensive communications channel for more than 400 employees that would improve business processes across the organization via a secure, unobstructed flow of information. Centralized access to all relevant administration documents including leases, closing binders, letters of credit, certificates of insurance, environmental reports and other property level documentation, would be required. The solution would have to bring together all relevant data for the management of 400 properties and 4,500 tenants and serve EOP's needs. In addition it would need to be flexible and expandable to support anticipated growth.

Solution

Phase I (Pre-Acquisition)

Equity Office needed all existing closing binders and third party reports converted to a digital format, indexed and then prepared so they could be uploaded directly into their document management system (Documentum). The documents to be scanned had some unique indexing requirements that EOP determined only internal personnel could provide.

EOP personnel used a project portal developed by Millennia to partially index documents that would then be sent to Millennia. Millennia Group prepped, scanned, reassembled and converted to PDF over 300,000 pages of documents contained in 100 boxes.

The project team worked closely with EOP to share indexing and quality control responsibilities using the Millennia project portal to ensure the integrity of all data added to the system prior to being uploaded into Documentum.

Phase II (Post-Acquisition)

The amount of information to be maintained in Documentum and the number of users would drop significantly as many properties in the portfolio were sold after the acquisition by Blackstone. EOP asked if Millennia Group could expand the project portal to incorporate all of the document images that were in the old system and be capable of being used for the ongoing process. This would allow EOP to accomplish two goals, reduce the overall cost of their document management infrastructure and improve access to the documents through a unified interface.

Millennia Group did just that. Equity Office deployed the Millennia Web-based document storage and retrieval application to replace Documentum. In addition, during the conversion process Millennia performed data integrity audit of files stored in Documentum.

Millennia has incorporated reporting tools, records retention, full text & meta data search capabilities, subscription services and have also given them the ability to selectively distribute collections of documents based on custom end user queries.

Results

The EOP Web-based document management system is now populated with the company's critical documents and is a fully functional, comprehensive communications channel that is contributed to and relied upon by the EOP organization. It has lead to significant enterprise level changes, improved workflow, reduced system licensing and operating expenses, and improved operational efficiencies across the organization.

Employees are spending significantly less time searching for and managing vital documents and more time focusing on the needs of managing their portfolio. Because the system allows for the sharing of secure documents with prospective buyers, it has proven to not only support the disposition process but also speed it up. With all assets now centrally located in one system, EOP has significantly reduced the amount of time and money previously spent on maintaining multiple hardware and software solutions.

"Millennia Group has been a valued partner of ours through our recent transitions," said Jeff Warren, Vice President of IT and CIO. "They were an integral part of our in-house solution and provided a cost-effective strategic solution when we explored outsourcing our document management needs. Millennia has been flexible along the way and has listened to our needs; ultimately providing us with a scalable solution that's been easy for the organization to adopt."