

Case Study Overview

The County of Humboldt Community Development Services Department was seeking a system to manage and track permit applications. The legacy systems had become very difficult to maintain and extend, resulting in costly time delays, errors, and frustrated customers. They sought a solution that was affordable, flexible and scalable across all divisions, to capture their unique process needs.

Only Interneer offered the flexibility, control, ease of use and workflow capabilities critical to meet their unique requirements

"Without a doubt, any public sector regulatory/permitting agency could benefit from this product."

Company

The Humboldt County Community Development Services Department is responsible for issuing building and planning permits. In a typical year, the department processes hundreds of building permits, planning permits, and code violations. Successful permit application review and approval requires the involvement of many local, state, and federal agencies. It also often requires multiple rounds of revisions to supporting documents such as construction plans and the development of technical studies such as soils and hydrology reports. The Department is committed to the professional and timely delivery of permitting services while minimizing the cost to customers and taxpayers.



Challenges

Challenges

Permit Management Simplified and Automated for Humboldt County

The County of Humboldt Community Development Services Department was struggling with how to track their permit applications. They had to deal with legacy systems that had evolved over decades into an incoherent patchwork. This was due to process alterations adopted over time without an analysis of the costs and benefits or a comprehensive review of the impact on the entire process.

According to the Development Assistance Manager, Steven Santos, "it is my responsibility to ensure that department operations are as streamlined as possible. One of the many challenges to providing consistent and accurate customer service is disparate and obsolete systems for managing and tracking permit applications."

"The cost of the problem took many forms," he added. "It included increased permit processing time which was expensive for both the customer and the department. It also included errors which were a drain on staff resources to correct. Unhappy customers were also expressing frustrations in the press and at public hearings."

Solution

"We didn't want to buy a rigid solution to which we would have to conform," Mr. Santos explained. "We needed a powerful platform. Interneer's Business Process Management Suite was the right product for our needs. In addition, the professional services' team's ability to learn our inherently complex workflows was impressive. Interneer was also willing to push the envelope on their platform and add features beneficial to our needs."

Only Interneer Intellect was able to capture the unique permit application processes and be able to scale to address future division needs and processes.

Results

"We have saved time particularly when it comes to management and reporting," shared Mr. Santos. "With Interneer we've been able to identify with greater accuracy which steps in the workflow represent the greatest bottlenecks. This has helped tremendously in identifying which areas need review or investment."

"The solution exceeded our integration goals" he added. "Building permits, inspection records, and transaction receipts all used to be done on separate systems and are now done through the platform. We are already planning on using the product for timesheets and billing. The prospect of integrating administrative systems like invoicing with our project management system for permits is incredibly exciting."

In January 2010 the Building Division received its annual audit. The auditors made a series of recommendations regarding how receipts are handled. The flexibility of the platform allowed Humboldt County to deploy security changes within 24 hours and implement all of the recommendations within five business days. The ease of the platform enabled them to make all of the system modifications in-house without the need for professional services from Interneer.