



Case Study 03

Sun Yamamoto K.K., Reduce storage space and enhance service efficiencies through digitising documents



Issues

- Burgeoning space requirements for pay slip storage
- Long response times for confirmation inquiries on earlier payments
- Laborious payment confirmation work for non-head office personnel

Solutions

- Introduced a color MFP and document management software to facilitate electronic reporting

Result

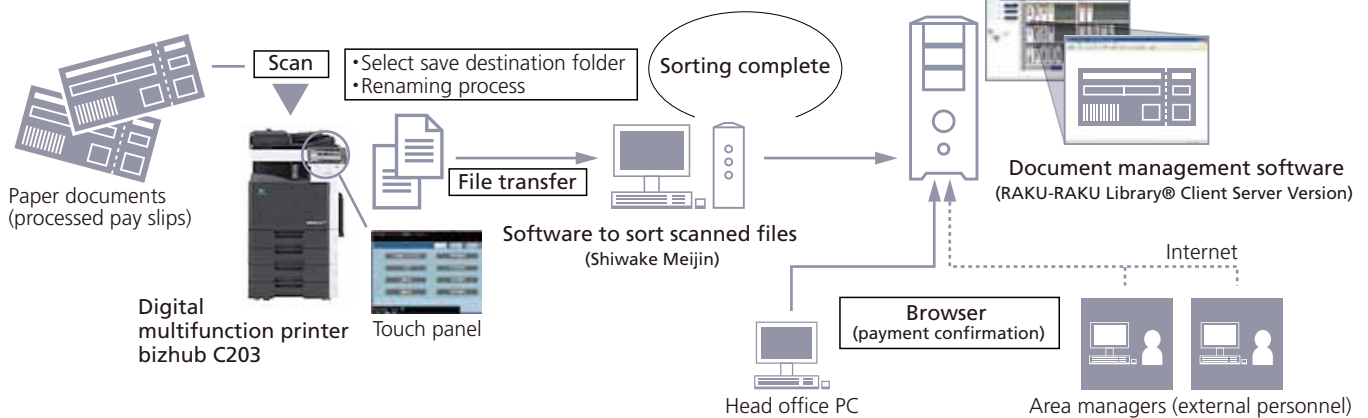
- By digitizing documents, it became significantly easier to search data, which has resulted in dramatic reduction of time needed to respond to customers. The number of phone calls between staff for inquiries has also decreased.
- The document management software has made it possible to automatically sort and save scanned data and streamline document digitizing.
- Significantly reduced the storage space that was needed for paper documents by introducing the electronic reporting

Company Profile

Company name:
Sun Yamamoto K.K.,
industry : Education

Sun Yamamoto has been operating its Meiko Gijuku cram school business in Kanagawa prefecture for more than twenty years. The first school in the Meiko Gijuku franchise is located in Mizunokuchi (Kawasaki). Using one-on-one instruction to encourage independent study, the schools are contributing to local communities by producing highly creative and self-reliant individuals adapted to the demands of 21st-century society.

Solution Key Components



■ Solutions provided

- bizhub C203 × 1sets

■ Application Software

- Software to sort scanned files (Shiwake Meijin)
- Document management software (RAKU-RAKU Library® Client Server Version)

Burgeoning space required for pay slip storage plus time-consuming document retrieval



Sun Yamamoto operates private cram schools in Kanagawa Prefecture. The company is a franchise chain of Meiko Gijuku, a pioneer in the field of tutorial-based cram schools. As of June 2009, the company was operating a total 34 schools in the Kawasaki, Yokohama and Hiratsuka areas in Greater Tokyo Area.

Mr. Toyokazu Yamamoto, the company's president, argues that it is the company's close involvement with the communities in which it operates that is its primary strength, together with independent study and one-on-one tuition, the twin pillars of the Meiko style of instruction. He explains that the educational guidance and support extended to students is tailored to the coursework and tests provided in the school to which each of the students attends.

In the course of its school operation, the company was experiencing problems connected with the archiving of tuition payment slips. Its monthly tuition fees are payable either by direct debit or money transfer, and, after completing money receiving process, all payment slips are mailed to head office where they are consolidated and archived. Storage space had become a serious problem.

Assistant Administrative Director, Mr. Kazuki Yamamoto, recalls: "The 1000-odd pay slips we received each month went into flat files by school for the most recent payments, before being transferred to cardboard boxes for storage.

Since we'd been keeping pay slips since 2004, we had now accumulated six boxes full and office shelves were overflowing." Storing the pay slips as paper documents was also creating retrieval headaches. When schools received inquiries pertaining to earlier payments from a student or his/her guardian, it was necessary to physically locate the pay slip in question before confirmation could be given. Ms. Ayako Kikuchi of the Administration Department confesses that: "Attempting to locate a particular pay slip, especially past slips, in amongst the huge volume in storage was sometimes a terribly time-consuming process. It meant keeping students and their guardians waiting for unconscionable lengths of time."



Although Sun Yamamoto looked into digitisation using company computers and flatbed scanners to address this problem, the process was never implemented. Mr. Kazuki Yamamoto reports that: "Since each scanned image file was stored in one folder, the folders would have to be sorted for individual schools. The workload involved in that task proved a major stumbling block."

Due to this environment with different devices co-existing, many issues came up relating to the operation and management of office devices. "Frequent replacement of supplies and troubleshooting required the IT Department to spend considerable effort and time just to respond to the many repair requests from every company department. Additionally, the difficulty in grasping running costs for all our office devices posed another significant problem."

Digitising gets rid of cardboard storage boxes

With the problems of storage space and document retrievability unresolved, in October 2008, Sun Yamamoto took advantage of the opening presented by the need to replace multifunction printers to introduce a Konica Minolta solution and set about converting its pay slips to a digital format as the first step in tackling the difficulties they were facing. The solution put forward by Konica Minolta included Colour MFP bizhub C203, hardware infrastructure such as a server, software to sort scanned files (called Shiwake Meijin in the Japanese market), and document management software.

The significant savings in storage space and the removal of the work of sorting scanned files, which had hampered the digitisation process to date, were critical to Sun Yamamoto's decision to introduce the Konica Minolta Solution.

"Scanned documents are automatically routed and saved to a specific folder, simply by selecting the relevant school folder when the pay slips are scanned. I was swayed by how little work was involved in this process." (Mr. Kazuki Yamamoto)

Another factor which supported the decision was the fact that the user interface for the document management software replicates actual cabinets and binders on a PC screen, meaning that the task of browsing and retrieving scanned files feels virtually identical to the real thing.

"Since the management process is essentially unchanged, it's been possible to

keep the number of new procedures that need to be committed to memory to a minimum, and since no extra strain has been placed on those in charge of managing school pay slips, the transfer to electronic documents has been made without a hitch." (Mr. Kazuki Yamamoto)

The introduction of the Konica Minolta Solution was accomplished quickly and smoothly, and the company began to reap a range of benefits as soon as the equipment became operable, with significant storage space savings representing the most significant benefit. "Now only the most recent pay slips are stored as paper documents in flat folders; all the earlier documents that were stored in

cardboard boxes have been stored in the main server. What that means is that we no longer have to concern ourselves with the problem of storage space." (Ms. Kikuchi) The resultant space savings are not limited to tuition fee pay slips: the resumes of school instructors, which had been filed in flat folders and occupied one whole shelf of a filing cabinet, have also been converted to electronic documents freeing up that storage space as well.



Improved searchability yields significant reductions in inquiry response times

Converting all the pay slips that had been stored in cardboard boxes to electronic documents has resulted in dramatic improvements in searchability. "In the unlikely event that we receive a retrospective pay slip inquiry, we're now able to provide an immediate response without keeping students or their guardians waiting," says Ms. Kikuchi, enthusiastically. She is full of praise for the system's usability, which includes a function for tagging important sections of binders.

The task of checking earlier pay slips not only falls to the company's head office; in certain instances, the manager of a particular area will be asked by a student or their guardian to confirm a particular payment. The network share functions of the document management software, however, have eliminated the need for the time-consuming calls to head office required to handle such inquiries in the past.

"Now area managers can access and check scanned pay slips via network using the document management software outside head office. Since there is no longer any need to call head office, the time and effort involved in processing payment inquiries has been dramatically reduced." (Mr. Kazuki Yamamoto)

Mr. Kazuki Yamamoto has the following to say of the total solutions provided by



Konica Minolta, which includes everything from the installation of MFP and the creation of paperless offices using the various software applications, to server-based document management: "We have a long-standing relationship with Konica Minolta, which, over the years, has given them a better understanding, even than ourselves, of the realities and problems of document management experienced here at Sun Yamamoto and enabled them to offer us the optimal solution. Maintenance support is always prompt and sympathetic, and Konica Minolta is an invaluable partner."

The company plans to extend the digitisation process to other routine head office operations and schools in the future. One idea under discussion is the creation of a database for test questions set in the past.

The company has a substantial back catalogue of test questions from the schools attended by its students and has concentrated its student support efforts on formulating tutorial policies based on historical trend analyses. Since the test papers have been stored in their original paper format in each school, it has proved difficult to improve the speed and accuracy of the trend analysis work.

"By digitising these documents and managing them as a consolidated entity, we should be able to make significant improvements in the accuracy and speed of trend analysis. This will likely strengthen our competitive advantage in the areas in which we operate." (Mr. Toyokazu Yamamoto)

With the supports of Konica Minolta, Sun Yamamoto looks set to continue making dramatic leaps forward.