

Hillsborough County Tax Collector Case Study

ApplicationXtender document management software implemented by Image One has transformed the Tax Collector into an award-winning model of government efficiency for a Florida county experiencing explosive growth.

Executive Summary

Temporary automobile tags were hard to track in 1998 for one million residents living in Hillsborough County, Florida. To more efficiently handle the high volume of requests, the Tax Collector turned to Image One to implement ApplicationXtender document management software to scan and digitally store the tags for faster search and retrieval.

Today, Hillsborough County serves 40% more residents but the Tax Collector has not had to add staff to handle the increasing volume of automobile tags, and they've eliminated all costs previously associated with handling paper. Instead of waiting two or three days for automobile tag requests and other documents, the Tax Collector can access them the same day for their residents.

Additionally, because of the efficiencies gained from ApplicationXtender and working with Image One, the Tax Collector now does much more than process automobile tags – they also serve the document processing, storage and retrieval of several other county departments.

Increased Efficiency & Other Highlights

- While the number of residents the staff is serving has increased by nearly a half million over 20 years, the county did not have to hire a single additional employee to handle the growing volume of automobile tags, reducing labor costs by over \$1 million in that timeframe
- Instead of having to dig through file drawers on their knees, employees can now access files with a click, which has saved so much time that the Tax Collector now offers additional services to the public, including birth certificate printing, issuing concealed weapons permits, and a new service that used to be handled by the public transportation commission prior to closing their office
- The Tax Collector saves an additional \$2,400 per year having gone paperless

Solutions Used

- ApplicationXtender 8.1
- Image Capture
- Document Manager
- ColdXtender

Government Efficiency Transformation

When consumers buy a new car, they are given a temporary tag at the car dealership. Back in 1998, there was no way to track these temporary tags so the Hillsborough County Tax Collector started keeping track of the tags by scanning them and recording them. That's when they found the value of an electronic management system. The move to go paperless started there and moved into other departments as the county continued to upgrade through various versions of ApplicationXtender over the years.

“Around that time, for about a five year period, there was a big explosion of things going from hard copy paper to imaging,” said the systems engineer for information services in the Tax Collector. He has witnessed the transformation throughout various county departments, from the use of adding machines for things like calculating water bills, to computer-automated processes for just about everything. Automation enabled the water department to get rid of two rooms of file cabinets, freeing up a space large enough to fit four large offices, he said. Document storage moved from bulky file cabinets to indexed digital files and access to information got faster and easier with ApplicationXtender.

Now, the Tax Collector has stations where they scan newspaper articles, employment applications, correspondence, motor vehicle titles, eminent domain documents, bankruptcy records, tax history, and driver's license applications. Scanning goes on daily at 14 stations that take up less space than the boxes of paper and rooms of files needed for the paper system.

“The biggest thing that changed was not having to physically deal with paper,” the systems engineer said. “In a lot of cases, we haven't needed to keep the paper anymore as long as we have a digital copy.”

In the past, county workers had to take turns caring for file cabinets and keeping them organized. If documents were filed improperly, the search could involve multiple file cabinets contained in at least two rooms. It could take days to find the proper documents. In addition, the paper required a lot of storage space.

“We are taking up less space,” said the systems engineer. “There is nowhere near as much paper being kept.”

Doing More

Now that the office has a more streamlined process, each employee can do more, even as the Hillsborough County Tax Collector has taken on a wide variety of additional services, including driver’s licenses, birth certificates, concealed weapons permits, fishing and hunting licenses, business taxes, and disabled parking permits – among others. The office currently uses ApplicationXtender to handle 68 document applications.

Additionally, with the ColdXtender application from Image One, the county electronically extracts and uploads property taxes from banks and title companies that escrow the money for the homeowner, saving even more time and money.

The county appreciates the ease of use that technology brings to the workplace but, when it comes to customer service at Image One, the systems engineer loves the fact that it’s built around people and that Image One responds quickly when they have questions about managing the system.

“I am always able to get a human being on the phone,” the systems engineer said. “I don’t get a place in the queue. That’s important. It makes a difference getting a real person.”

Labor Savings

Today, Hillsborough County serves 1.4 million residents, up from 1 million in 1998 – a 40% increase. However, with the efficiencies gained by ApplicationXtender and Image One, the Tax Collector has not had to add a single person to their staff to handle the increasing volume of automobile tag processing.

Had they not used technology to streamline their process, they may not have needed 40% more staff but they would have needed at least 1-2 new employees over a 5-15 year portion of that time frame, which equates to approximately \$1.125 in labor savings. This does not include the cost of the software, hardware, maintenance, professional services, and some degree of additional IT support, but the resulting return on investment (ROI) was significant enough for the county to transfer services provided by other departments, like the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to the Tax Collector – the county’s new model of efficiency.

Additional Savings

The use of ApplicationXtender saves Hillsborough County on paper, ink, toner, files and storage space.

The average office worker uses 10,000 sheets of paper per year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. In the Tax Collector alone, there are 30 workers that are no longer using paper. This is an approximate savings of \$2,400 a year based on the cost of \$80 a year for two boxes of paper.

About the Hillsborough County Tax Collector

The Hillsborough County Tax Collector collects and distributes local property, business and tourist development taxes. This includes collecting motor vehicle, vessel, and mobile home fees, conduct road tests and issue registrations, titles, driver licenses and certified copies of FL birth certificates. The dollars collected help support schools, parks, roads, libraries, waterways, and transit systems, and was the first tax collector to win both the recognized with the Governor's Sterling Award (2008) and the Sterling Sustained Excellence Award (2011). More:

www.hillstax.org

About Image One

Image One specializes in solving critical business problems by automating your business office through the use of Enterprise Content Management (ECM) and Workflow Process Automation Software, Document Imaging Hardware and Professional Services. Image One's core services maximize and streamline your business production, providing you with the ability to easily capture, create, manage, audit and control retention of all data, forms, files and documents within your organization. We provide clients with an enlightened approach to information management systems, structure and strategy – no matter how difficult the job. More: www.image-1.com