

CASE STUDY

Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court increases service levels to attorneys, the courts and the public with Global 360

The Challenge

Serving as the primary information collection department for the County's judicial system, the Clerk's office was experiencing huge process and workflow inefficiencies fueled by millions of paper-based records that hampered its ability to effectively support and service the public and the county judiciary. The system was plagued by inefficiencies due to the time required by staff to receive, review, copy, sort, file, secure, store, track, retrieve and move paper-based court files.

"We spent the majority of our time dealing with the paper – either processing the individual pieces of paper or preparing the files, filing things away, and then also pulling cases and sending them to other locations," said Diane Elliot, Probate Department Manager. "It impacted everyone: our staff, the judges or general magistrate, the public and attorneys."

Legislative mandates also required the Clerk's office to support e-filing to provide citizens with electronic access to courthouse records and forms via the Internet.

The Solution

The Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court's office deployed Global 360's Case Management solution, Case360, to manage and standardize their Probate court case workflow, act as the central repository for all Probate court records, enable greater collaboration between office workers, provide tracking, auditing and monitoring of court records as they flow through the court, and make the documents available for public viewing.

"The Case360 system facilitates the movement of these court documents through the system," said Jeff Gates, Director, Court & Operational Services Division. "At any time, we can precisely know the status and priority of all work in the system."

Paper documents are captured at the front-end, using the existing Global 360 Execute360 system. The resulting images are then passed to the Case360 system where they are routed among four major groups of individuals: Intake, Audit, Magistrates, and Judges. The system allows Intake and Audit users to "prepare" cases for the Magistrates and Judges by identifying the key documents to be reviewed and acted upon, as well as the additional supporting documents that may be needed for proper handling of the case. Users, such as Judges, also have the ability to apply electronic signatures to working documents.

Challenges

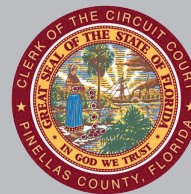
Replace time-consuming and costly paper-based processes with an automated system to standardize processes, improve visibility, meet legislative mandates, and enhance customer service to county judiciary and citizens.

Goals

Implement Case360 to automate court record workflow, improve staff task management and collaboration, and provide management with needed visibility for improved decision making.

Results

Achieved immediate access to court records, dramatically reduced storage and supply costs, improved customer service, and met e-filing legislative mandates.



Customer Overview

Founded in 1912, Pinellas County is the most densely populated county in the state of Florida and currently boasts a population of nearly one million residents.

Made up of a unique mix of 25 governmental bodies, the Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court is responsible for maintaining court records and pleadings, securing court evidence, collecting and disbursing court fines, and variety of other functions within the County's judicial system in support of the county's 24 municipalities and unincorporated areas.





Impact on Managers

Management has full visibility into all Clerk's office work queues so the staff always knows exactly what work is pending and can escalate a case if the situation calls for it, making the office more responsive to emergent cases.

The audit trail provided by the new system means management knows when items are processed and forwarded to other staff for review, approval, or signature. The workflow improvements have standardized all of the basic procedures for processing court files and documents, and a more intuitive user interface has significantly reduced training time, allowing employees to quickly be cross-trained on multiple roles and responsibilities.

"The Global 360 application and processes that we have put in place for the Probate department, can also provide the same type of business solution in other court areas like misdemeanor, criminal, juvenile and also civil," said Jeff Gates, Director, Court & Operational Services Division. "We expect to see the same type of efficiencies in those court areas as we have in probate."

Impact on the Business

Since moving to an electronic case management system, The Clerks' office has improved efficiency and productivity in Probate case file management. Service levels to attorneys, judges, and the public have increased significantly, enabling requested case files and records to be turned around almost instantly, where previously it could take a week.

The solution has improved court file workflow, created an improved audit trail within the system, and enabled the online and simultaneous access to county records and court files, positioning the Clerk's office to be in compliance with the state's legislative mandate requiring them to support e-filing and make records publicly available via the Internet.



Impact on Participants

The case management solution has changed the way work gets done within the Clerk's office, making the staff more efficient, effective, and happy delivering data and services to their customers. The staff no longer wastes times looking for lost cases and pleadings, which took a tremendous toll on staff morale. Employees are more motivated to do their work and have the added benefit of constantly being able to see the amount of work pending in their queues, enabling them to concentrate on more constructive work within the system.

Case files and records can be viewed simultaneously by multiple stakeholders at multiple remote locations, and all Clerk of the Circuit Court staff, Judges, Attorneys, and county citizens now have immediate access to court records and files via the Internet.

The staff feels more comfortable with the information they are providing to court and citizen requests because they can see the documents in their role-based user interface and know they are delivering the information requested.



Impact on IT

Access to court records and the workflow that supports them can still be carried out from remote sites, enabling the Clerk's office to maintain business continuity and service to its constituents.

The Global 360 system has also increased the county's ability to plan for and recover from a disaster or other disruption in business operations. While catastrophes such as hurricanes remain an obvious threat to coastal Pinellas County, business disruptions can also result from power outages, equipment malfunctions, cyber-terrorist attack, or the inability for staff to man jobs caused by illness. Pinellas County now has the ability to electronically store all of their records off site and secure them against natural disasters.

"Global 360 has changed the way work gets done at the Pinellas County Clerk of the Circuit Court's office by making us more efficient and more effective"

Ken Burke | Clerk of the Circuit Court