

Bentonville Public Schools found a true paperless solution with Softdocs and has since revolutionized their Accounts Payable office.

“Softdocs is a truly paperless system that creates efficiencies, improves effectiveness and saves employee time and resources.”

DR. STERLING MING

EXECUTIVE FINANCE DIRECTOR

QUICK FACTS

- ▶ Softdocs customer since 2013
- ▶ Implemented in Finance

KEY PLAYERS

- ▶ Dr. Sterling Ming, Executive Finance Director
- ▶ Nathalie Brunell, Director of Accounting

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Increasing student enrollment
- ▶ Paper overtaking the district office
- ▶ Time-consuming, manual business processes

SOLUTIONS

The Softdocs ECM Platform

- ▶ Restructuring of AP approval process
- ▶ Addition of e-forms (online pay stubs, W-2s, AP file storage, HR applications & more)
- ▶ Electronic stapling of supporting documents



BENTONVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BENTONVILLE, AR

Located in the northwest corner of Arkansas, also known as “Walmart Country,” Bentonville is home to the world’s largest retailer. With the area population constantly growing, Bentonville Public Schools has grown dramatically in the last decade and is now one of the largest in the state with over 14,000 enrolled students.



Dr. Sterling Ming joined Bentonville's Finance department as the Executive Director at the height of the district's growth in 2006. It wasn't long before he saw the need for a more efficient way of handling the vast amount of paper flooding the Accounts Payable office.



By 2011, he had been introduced to the idea of enterprise content management software and began investigating methods to reduce the amount of paper and storage space they were using.

"Most systems that advertised 'paperless' were using paper forms that were scanned into a storage retrieval system as PDF files."

Looking to reduce paper, improve storage requirements and create greater time efficiency, Ming found his solution at the 2011 Southeastern Association of Schools Business Officials conference, where he was introduced to Softdocs. He found support among the Finance team with Nathalie Brunell, Director of Accounting, to ignite the changes in productivity and storage space. In 2013, Bentonville purchased the Softdocs ECM Platform.

"Softdocs is truly a paperless system that creates efficiencies, improves effectiveness and saves employee time and resources. Softdocs employees are knowledgeable of school business operations, customer focused and responsive to your needs," shared Ming.

Implementing the Solution

From the Softdocs' Professional Services perspective, it makes a huge difference when project leads are willing to embrace change and work together to find the best possible format for implementing their solutions.

Bentonville was extremely ambitious in the beginning of their implementation, and that enthusiasm continued throughout the process as the added more solutions.

Changes to the AP approval process were implemented to eliminate the mass amounts of paper documents that were accumulating. However, not all were as enthusiastic as Ming and Brunell.

"We met much resistance from our staff, but because of Softdocs' relentless work and follow up, we were able to not only overcome the resistance, but make the rest of the solution positive," said Ming.

Visible Change

The AP clerk who was hesitant to the changes had a table behind her desk full of folders, staplers and invoices. Within two weeks of implementation, she had stopped using the stapler and began removing the folders to give away to other staff. She even got rid of the table behind her desk and is getting ready to get rid of her inbox since she no longer needs it.

Ming said this employee's work area changed so drastically that other employees who were unaware of the process changes thought she was leaving the district.

The transition from paper to automation can sometimes be bumpy when a finance employee's job is to provide supporting documentation to make sure they are covered.

"What used to take our AP clerk two hours is now complete in about 15 minutes,"

"Before, she would have to print checks and purchase orders, find and sort the documentation, staple it all together, and then file. She doesn't have to do any of that now because Softdocs takes care of it automatically."

The AP approval process wasn't the only thing changed. Bentonville uses Softdocs for online paystubs, W-2s, AP file storage, human resource applications, and several additional online forms. Processing end of the year tax forms used to take Brunell days. This year W-2s were completed in 30 minutes.

When a department has the right tools to succeed, what used to cause frustration is now a relatively smooth process.

"This type of effort is not commonplace in today's world and is a testament to the character of the people responsible for it," said Ming. He continued on to say that because of Softdocs' ability to relate to administration and employees, the rest of the processes are running smoothly.

"Softdocs and Bentonville Public Schools' relationship has developed into a partnership to improve education."

ABOUT SOFTDOCS

Softdocs is a privately-held software company focused on the development, implementation and support of enterprise content management, electronic forms and workflow solutions for the education marketplace.

With a next generation, fully browser-based platform, Softdocs' solutions integrate directly with existing ERP solutions. Institutions are able to eliminate the need for paper-based records and processes institution-wide from student records, finance, human resources, and beyond.