

MISL Case Study – The Hyde Group



The Hyde Group

MISL carried out a successful project for the Hyde Group, an extensive housing association based in the south of England and London with over 42,000 properties. MISL was commissioned via the Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) national framework contract number 390 for document scanning. The project was an example of scanning to the BS10008 standard for the legal admissibility and evidential weight of scanned documentation and involved a high level of interaction with the customer to design the best approach to their unique logistical challenges.

The Challenge

Hyde's main challenge was that all properties and tenancies in the group (across 42,000 properties) were managed by local offices in 12 different locations from as far north as Peterborough and as far south as Chichester. The desire was to centralize the management of the administration of these properties in a series of call centers. The problem being that, to manage the administration effectively, the call center staff would need to access the paperwork for each property centrally and log any incoming paperwork against the property.

This key requirement meant that all the files would need to be scanned and then made available digitally in an Enterprise Document Management System (EDMS). Hyde had already procured an EDMS system; Serengeti, part of the Netcall Group.

In scoping out the process MISL got involved so as to help design solutions to the following challenges:

- The files in the different offices were not stored in a uniform way
- There needed to be an audit trail logging the exact whereabouts of each file throughout the process
- The files contained documents that held different retention periods and, in some cases, the documents needed to be kept for legal reasons
- The files needed to be registered against property and tenancy information but this information was not easily available in the files and could only be found by leafing through the information.
- To facilitate different work streams of the various administrative tasks Hyde wanted to be able to route different types of documents to different areas. This involved the registering of individual documents within each file
- There was a desire to be able to destroy the documents after the process was completed
- There was a limited budget for the project.

MISL worked closely with Hyde to design the best approach to overcome these challenges.

Project Design

When MISL got involved with the project we had to consult with the client over the context of the project and the various challenges involved in order to propose the most effective means of delivering the desired end result.

When scanning in files it is vital that they are correctly indexed for the unique internal references that they relate to. In this case that was the property and tenancy unique reference numbers and the document type. With these key bits of information the ultimate end users in the call centers would be able to pull up the relevant documentation for the actions they were carrying out.

Document level identification can be done in several ways. Ideally (and this is commonly used in NHS environments) barcodes are attached to documents or forms as they are generated or pre-printed for use in the field. This allows scanners to automatically capture the document type information along with identifying the beginning and end of each document. Unfortunately however, when you are scanning historic data such barcode information is rarely present. In the absence of pre identified documents therefore the only other options are manual. A manual solution would involve the insertion of barcoded separator sheets before each document which then identifies it to the scanner. If a further sheet were inserted at the beginning of the file level batch with the Property and tenancy identifiers on them then the scanners would be able to register the key identifying information and document type information against every document scanned in a file.

The down side of this approach being that the manual costs of inserting these separator sheets in the files is, in some cases, prohibitively expensive.

Coupled with the need for tracking the location of each file through the process and the fact that there needed to be a process to identify for each file the correct property and tenancy identifiers we needed to come up with a different solution.

The solution we formulated with the client was as follows:

- The client would set up a team to travel to each office to supervise the registering, preparing and packing of all the files in each office location.
- The team would take each file and look up the correct property ID and tenancy ID in each file and enter it into a bespoke piece of software that was designed by the Hyde ICT team.
- Once the references had been sourced and entered into the system the system would print 2 barcoded header sheets for each file. One for the tenancy agreement (a legal document that needed to be retained after scanning) and the other for all remaining documentation.
- The barcodes were inserted into the file before the tenancy agreement (at the front of the file) and before the remaining documentation. The file was then placed into a box (that was recorded on the system also).
- Once a box was full it was logged as 'closed and sealed' and placed in an area for MISL to collect.
- The Hyde software then generated a CSV file for each box detailing exactly which files were in each box for tracking purposes. This was emailed directly to MISL
- MISL then collected the completed boxes at regular intervals in our secure and GPS tracked vehicles.

The MISL process

Once the boxes for each batch were collected from the office locations they were returned directly to the MISL processing facility in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

The MISL team carried out the following process on the documentation:

- Opened each box and checked the contents against the CSV file inventory that was emailed through by the Hyde boxing up team
- Prepared each file to remove bindings and staples where present and to ensure the paperwork was in the best condition for scanning
- The scanning team then scanned each file using a manual feed scanning process. This involved viewing each image as it was scanned to ensure the correct image quality.
- The scanning software automatically captured the Property Reference, Tenancy Reference and document type (Tenancy Agreement or Miscellaneous) from the header sheets that had been inserted at the boxing up stage.
- 10% of the boxes scanned then went through a further QA check where every page was manually checked against the scanned images in the entire box.
- All of the scanned images were processed by Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software resulting in a searchable PDF file for each document.
- The final data was checked for accuracy a final time and then delivered, together with a CSV upload file, to the Hyde ICT team in London via encrypted DVD.
- MISL then separated the Tenancy Agreements from the remainder of the files and stored them in new boxes for long term storage/return to the client. This involved creating a detailed inventory for each box.
- After a period of approximately 3 months the Hyde Group authorised MISL to securely destroy the non-Tenancy Agreement paperwork to the BS15713:2009 standard for secure destruction.

After each delivery the Hyde ICT team uploaded the scanned files to the EDMS system by means of an automated upload tool

BS10008 standard

The project was carried out to the BS10008 standard for the Legal admissibility and evidential weight of scanned documentation.

This is a standard that is entered into by the owner of the materials, in this case the Hyde Group, and was monitored and maintained by them. The standard required that the scanned documentation is an accurate record of the original paperwork in both content and structure. The standard ensures that the digitized copies can be used as evidence in a court of law in the UK and required that MISL carried out 100% image QA at the point of scanning and a further 10% page to Image Quality assurance. At various points in the project the Hyde Group project manager carried out spot check quality assurance on the digitized files at the MISL premises.

Day forward scanning

After the back scanning process was completed Hyde implemented a day forward process whereby incoming documentation to each of the local offices was registered at the document level on the system and a barcoded header sheet was generated. The documents were placed in boxes over a

few weeks until the boxes were full and then MISL collected and scanned the documents for uploading into the EDMS system. That service is still being provided by MISL ongoing.

Conclusion

The key principle with document scanning projects is to ensure that the project is designed in close consultation with the client and is designed to use technology and processes to overcome any challenges and fulfil the client's objectives. The result of such a consultative approach for this project is that MISL were instrumental in resolving a significant logistical challenge for the Hyde Group in a cost effective and efficient manner. MISL is proud of its relationship and association with the Hyde Group and are delighted that we remain the Group's supplier of choice for all scanning activity.

Project statistics

- Duration: 6 months
- Total number of files scanned: 42,000
- Total number of collection locations: 12
- Total number of pages scanned: 8,000,000 approx.
- Total number of boxes collected: 3,360

Reference Contact details:

Derek March
Project Management Team Lead
T: 020 7378 5075 (Ext. 7075)
E: derek.march@hyde-housing.co.uk
The Hyde Group
142-152 Long Lane Studios
Staple Street
London
SE1 4BS
www.hyde-housing.co.uk

MISL Contact Details

Steven Clarke
Sales & Marketing Director

Tel: +44 (0) 1992 470 060
Email: steven.clarke@misl.co.uk

19 Pindar Road
Hoddesdon
Herts
EN11 0DE

Tel: +44 (0) 1992 470 060
Fax: +44 (0) 1992 460 690
steven.clarke@misl.co.uk
www.misl.co.uk