



CASE STUDY – eRAMP

How even small companies can save big with our services

About eRamp – This small-sized, Ottawa based company helps clients to architect accessibility into their corporate environments. Their comprehensive approach takes into consideration, among other things, web accessibility, sensitive accommodation, current and future IM/IT infrastructure, policy evaluation including hiring, retention, promotion, accessible delivery of programs, services and products to clients.

Suitesonline.com services were used to perform a pilot document management and book-keeping project on 1-years worth of business document, which included document scanning, indexing, and entry of transactions into QuickBooks software.

Existing setup for document management and accounting – Being a small company about 5 hours of monthly book-keeping was being performed by the company. This was either done in-house or an external book-keeper was used. They had a large paper box with 14 folders and some loose sheets of papers in it. The documents were mostly letter sized, along with smaller receipts, checks, transaction stubs, smaller bills, bank statements, photocopied credit card statements, CCRA reports, and other correspondence.

We interviewed the accountant, Mr. Eric Sonogo (Sonogo Boivin and Associates), to identify the specific problems which they faced in their current processes, if any. The problems identified by them were:

1. Waste of company resources – Book-keeping was a chore that was deemed as a waste of time for the qualified man-power within the company.
2. Lack of external resources – Good book-keepers were often hard to find. New book-keepers had to become reacquainted with the business and the usual 5 hours would take 10 hours per month.
3. Inaccurate entries – Some of the entries were inaccurate. Especially when internal staff did the book-keeping, the accountant had a hard time sifting through wrong data.
4. Clutter in the office – The folders and papers lying around the office were viewed as cluttering up the office.
5. Risk of document loss – The boxes full of folders and loose papers posed an auditing risk to the company. Since there was no back-up copy of the documents any loss or damage was considered serious damage and the risk was evaluated to be high.

Suitesonline.com Solution – A quarterly cycle was proposed for document management and accounting help. The methodology proposed was as follows:

1. Document scanning – It was estimated that scanning of documents in house would cost about \$30 per quarter, based on 2 hours of work by the admin staff. But an external digitization company was hired for scanning documents. Perimeter Digital (www.perimeterdigital.com) scanned approximately 1000 documents. The work was professional quality and was accomplished within 3 working days.
2. Indexing – Scanned documents were uploaded to Suitesonline.com secure servers using proprietary client software – SIDOMA (Simple Document Manager). Documents were unzipped, spliced and indexed by the Suitesonline.com services team. Document entries were labeled and described with meta-data consisting of: date, type (whether it was a bank statement, invoice, bill payment, expense report, government report, check, etc.), document owner, vendor, amount, and additional notes.
3. Quality check #1 – The Suitesonline.com accounting team took a preliminary look at the documents and it was found that a few documents had not been scanned properly. These documents were re-scanned and uploaded.
4. Initial business consultation – A detailed questionnaire was completed by the accountant who met with the Suitesonline.com team. This 1 hour meeting was to understand the clients' business operations and other details.
5. Accounting software – The client used Quickbooks 2003 software which was available with the services team. The opening balances were uploaded for transaction updates.
6. Issue resolution #1 – A few documents were missing and clarifications were sought regarding 27 of the uploaded documents. These were brought to the attention of the accountant through the software and via email. It was resolved successfully in 2 days.
7. Book-keeping service – Book-keeping was accomplished in 4 days. The services team conducted their own quality checks during all operations.
8. Quality check #2 – A random quality check was initiated by the accountant for about 10% of the transactions entered and it was found to be 100% accurate.
9. Post project review – The project was reviewed by the accountant and the Suitesonline.com services team and issues and concerns were discussed.
10. The client was provided with a digital backup of all documents, updated books, and software to access all the documents using a browser.

Problems faced – Since it was a pilot project initiated with a new client most of the problems were in understanding the business of the client and getting used to their methodology. The following problems were encountered:

1. Scanning problem – A problem was encountered with scanning the documents, because some of the documents were stapled together and also each of the folders had documents of multiple sizes.
2. Indexing of documents – A few duplicates were encountered during indexing. Normally these show up easily when the first review is performed but in this case the photocopied document had a different date hand-written on it. The issue was resolved at the time of book-keeping.
3. Shareholders information – The accountant entering the books required shareholder information and required a few clarifications about the business. A call to the clients' accountant solved this problem.
4. Issues – The book-entry personnel had made some assumptions while doing their work, and noted them down as issues. E-Ramp's accountant had some problems understanding a couple of these issues which had to be clarified via a phone call.
5. General problems – General problems encountered have to do with numbering and sequencing of documents, elimination of duplicates (multiple documents for a single transaction, eg. A visa statement, visa imprint, and a receipt), re-scanning, missing documents, etc. The standard method used to overcome such recurring problems is the use of checklists and quality reviews that are conducted periodically.

Costs – The following table lists the time taken and costs associated with document management and book-keeping using traditional methods and using Suitesonline.com services over a period of 1 year:

| Activity | Cost before Suitesonline.com Services | | Suitesonline.com Services Costs | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| | Hours | Cost | Hours | Cost |
| Document digitization | 0 | \$0 | 4 | \$120 |
| Document indexing | 0 | \$0 | 50 | \$500 |
| Initial business consultation | 2 | \$100 | 2 | \$100 |
| SIDOMA software cost | 0 | \$0 | 2 | \$20 |
| Book-keeping service | 50 | \$1,500 | 50 | \$500 |
| Final review | 2 | \$100 | 2 | \$100 |
| TOTAL | | \$1,700 | | \$1,340 |

ROI and Benefits – The pilot project shows that by using Suitesonline.com services instead of traditional services cost savings of about 21% were realized. This number is likely to go up for larger companies.

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|--|-----------------|
| Cost for regular book-keeping | \$140 per month |
| Cost of Suitesonline.com book-keeping services | \$110 per month |

Savings **20%**

The pilot does not take into account additional benefits that accrue through the use of Suitesonline.com services. The most important of these benefits according to the accountant are:

1. Efficient services delivery
2. Operational consistency
3. Better quality
4. Risk mitigation against loss or damage of documents
5. Ease of accounting operations

Conclusions and testimonials – Overall the e-Ramp team were pleased with the results of the pilot. For references and comments please contact Suitesonline.com at (613) 265-7472, or email marketing@suitesonline.com