



CASE STUDY

Countrywide Financial Relies on RightFax for High-Volume e-Document Delivery Across the Enterprise

Starting with a single RightFax Server installation in 1995, Countrywide has continuously upgraded and expanded the solution to include more capacity and take advantage of advanced features. RightFax is used by both business and functional units of Countrywide and has become an integral part of operations. The enterprise has standardized on RightFax with more than 40 servers and 1,300 channels. It processes in excess of 3.4 million pages per month via RightFax e-document delivery solutions.

BACKGROUND

Founded in 1969, Countrywide Financial Corporation is a member of the S&P 500, Forbes 500 and Fortune 500. It is a diversified financial services company serving consumers and institutions, with mortgage origination and servicing at its core. Serving millions of customers domestically and internationally, Countrywide is headquartered in Calabasas, CA, and has more than 30,000 employees and 500 offices.

THE CHALLENGE

Its name aptly describes Countrywide's services and requirements. Since it serves millions of customers in hundreds of locations, Countrywide needs technology solutions that will meet enterprise demand. The organization places a heavy emphasis on automation and technology as a means to maximize operational efficiency. As a result, when it came to handling the distribution of mission-critical documents, Countrywide required a flexible solution that offered automated and integrated efficiency for the entire enterprise.

In the early '90s, Countrywide still used paper-based stand-alone fax machines. For example, the Real Estate Owned (REO) department within Countrywide's Home Loans unit relied on tedious, slow processes that involved walking to fax machines and storing hard copies in large files.

At any one time, REO is managing or selling thousands of its investors' properties. Busy fax machines, lost documents and the lack of immediate positive feedback and tracking of communications were of concern. REO managed properties via paper-based folders, transferring the entire folder or parts thereof to each department that was involved with property. This was both time consuming and increased the risk of errors and missing documents. Part of the process also included sending the priority documents overnight to escrow agents, resulting in additional costs to Countrywide.

For all Countrywide departments, when a sale or financial transaction is in process, brokers and customers want immediate answers and approvals. Offers, quotes and other activities often need to be routed within minutes and a response provided within an hour, something that was not possible with the legacy stand-alone fax systems.

In addition, it was difficult for Countrywide to track and monitor processes with this traditional workflow. Management needed an improved method to generate metrics whereby processing efficiency and employee productivity could be evaluated.

THE SOLUTION

Countrywide deployed Captaris RightFax e-document delivery solutions to respond to needs across the enterprise. Working with Instant InfoSystems, a California provider of technology communications solutions, Countrywide started with a single RightFax server in 1995. After years of proven reliability, the organization extended RightFax technology to all of its business units and implemented more than 40 servers and 1,300 channels. Each month, RightFax manages in excess of 3.4 million faxed pages.

Countrywide executives point to RightFax benefits that make the solution valuable at the enterprise-level. "RightFax offers flexibility in its use," Russ Perdomo, Vice President of Network Faxing, said. "Incorporation into other environments returns efficiency gains for every business unit."

Flexibility - "RightFax integration is a plus," Perdomo said. "It is accepted throughout the organization and entrenched in several different applications." As the foundation of Countrywide infrastructure, an AS400 system enables the company to rapidly build automated systems that lower costs, enhance efficiency and make the home loan process seamless. RightFax is one of these automated systems: it fax-enables and leverages Countrywide technology investments, including AS400, Microsoft SQL Server and IBM Lotus Notes.

For instance, in REO, loan guidelines are faxed directly from Countrywide to close to 10,000 brokers with contact data directly pulled from the AS400 system and linked to RightFax. Overall, integration leads to increased productivity and optimized workflow.

Efficiency - In use across Countrywide, RightFax efficiencies include:

- Elimination of paper-based processing
- Minimization of the time it takes to process transactions and reduction of errors
- Support of security and reporting requirements as outlined by guidelines such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act
- Cost-saving use of existing infrastructure

Using the RightFax Gateway for IBM Lotus Notes, Countrywide units manage faxes from the Notes Inbox. As a result, transmissions are securely sent to intended recipients via tamper-resistant methods. Electronic tracking and storage is also automatic, helping companies fulfill Sarbanes-Oxley five-year storage requirements. Overall, Perdomo reported integration makes handling faxes part of employee workflow. "They like that," he said. "One of the approaches we've taken is to not change the workflow, but to see where we can add value without changing the process."

RESULTS

Increased efficiency and optimized workflow lead to improved customer service and reduced operational costs. For instance, just within the REO department:

- The near elimination of a physical real estate folder that required interdepartmental routing has reduced both processing errors and time.
- The large broker network receives response to offers, and other communication in minutes, not hours or days, which allows Countrywide to process more properties and provides a superior service to the broker network.
- "Productivity enhancements are inherent to RightFax itself," Perdomo said. "It improves response and reduces cost."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris is a leading provider of Business Information Delivery solutions that integrate, process and automate the flow of messages, data and documents. Captaris produces a suite of proven products and services, in partnership with leading enterprise technology companies, delivered through a global distribution network. Captaris has installed over 80,000 systems in 44 countries with 93 of the Fortune 100 using the company's award-winning products and services to reduce costs and increase the performance of critical business information investments. For more information please contact us at www.captaris.com or call +1.520.320.7000.

Instant InfoSystems (IIS), headquartered in Torrance, California, is a leading provider of technology based communications solutions for business. For more information, visit www.instantinfosystems.com.

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