

CASE STUDY



M-Files helps keep fresh meals and 7,000 volunteers on the move

COMPANY

Meals on Wheels South Australia (MoWSA)

INDUSTRY

Community Service, Non-profit

LOCATION

Australia

PARTNER

Advance Business Consulting

Meals on Wheels South Australia (MoWSA) is a charity that aids elderly and ill residents in their region by delivering meals to those who can't prepare or purchase their own. Since their creation in 1954, they've served 50 million meals and currently deliver 4,300 a day across the entire state. In addition to fresh, nutritious food, they offer a sense of connection and regular social contact for their recipients. With a full-time staff of 70 employees, 84 branches, 40 kitchens, and a fluctuating roster of around 7,000 volunteers, every day presents a variety of logistical challenges.

HIGHLIGHTS




Automated workflows improve efficiency and compliance



Refined processes lead to \$50,000 annual savings



Secure document management allows for collaboration across vast distances



“Through this fairly simple business process – automating and digitizing invoice payments, we get a whole lot of other benefits...we saved \$50,000 a year.”

David Smith

Executive Manager of Corporate Services
Meals on Wheels SA

KEY CHALLENGES BEFORE M-FILES

Serving communities across vast distances

South Australia occupies more than 984,000 square kilometers of arid lowlands and rolling plains. To reach residents in need across the entire state, MoWSA has set up 84 separate branches. Each one is required to order and receive food items. To keep each branch open, the main office in Adelaide sends funds and approves invoices.

The Meals on Wheels concept relies heavily on volunteers, and MoWSA has a roster of around 7,000 helpers that cook and deliver the food. When these volunteers use their own vehicles, they are reimbursed. That means thousands of regular payments need to be invoiced, sorted, and paid. However, MoWSA’s previous method was cash-based and open to human error.

“We reimburse our volunteers’ out-of-pocket expenses. Currently, we pay [a nominal amount] for each delivery round --reimbursement for their petrol and wear and tear,” said David Smith, Executive Manager of Corporate Services. “Generally, a treasurer would go down and get whatever the amount of cash was, put it in an envelope, and the driver could take the money. If they didn’t take the money, it got scooped into a bucket and donated.”

Additionally, some of the most remote “country branches” have limited internet access or only one computer shared among its entire staff. “All our devices are out in the wild and the security consciousness of our users can be questionable,” Smith said. “How do you connect all these remote locations to a central office?”

“You tend to think that when you work for a for-purpose organization, you might be free from hackers and cyberbullies, but that’s not true,” he added. “Meals on Wheels is well known and a potential target.”

It was clear that MowSA needed a more modern, streamlined way to pay invoices, approve budgets, reimburse volunteers, and send documents securely across vast distances.

THE M-FILES SOLUTION

Smarter workflows, secure documents

“We automated the processing of driver payments, stopped the cash payments, and began to reimburse them with direct credit,” Smith said. “We collect a declaration from the driver and get their bank account details. Obviously, we need that to be secure, so it’s stored in M-Files.”

Through this automation process, MoWSA found added gains – now they could actively check their rolls and make sure each driver was correctly named, checked for criminal records, and covered by MoWSA's insurance. These compliance checks have improved the safety and security of MoWSA greatly.

Additionally, MoWSA digitized and streamlined its complicated invoice system with the branches. "We were able to radically change the financial structure of MoW in South Australia," Smith said. "Previously, branches sent invoices by fax, which really just pushes the workload elsewhere. Now, with M-Files, each branch can scan an invoice, and sign to say they've received goods instantly."

"There are few places where they don't have a computer or internet connection," Smith added. "M-Files is great because our team members can access it on a mobile phone or iPad."

THE RESULTS

Workflow automation leads to surprise \$50,000 a year in savings

Since implementing M-Files, MoWSA has enjoyed safer, more efficient processes that have saved them significant amounts of money.

"Now that the individual branches no longer need to pay their own bills, we were able to close all their bank accounts, their checkbooks, and stop sending this money backward and forward," Smith said. "We discovered that through this fairly simple business process – automating and digitizing invoice payments, we get a whole lot of other benefits. Once we closed all the branch bank accounts, we saved \$50,000 a year."



Advance Business Consulting is a trusted technology advisor and business system integrator with over 20 years' experience in delivering solutions to assist organisations in becoming more efficient, profitable, and secure. Advance has a proven track record of providing solutions for information management, data analytics, data integration, cyber security, low-code development platforms, project management software, business analytics, outsourced IT, and custom development.

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WHY M-FILES?

M-Files is a global leader in information management. The M-Files metadata-driven document management platform enables knowledge workers to instantly find the right information in any context, automate business processes, and enforce information control. This provides businesses with a competitive advantage and substantial ROI as they deliver better customer experiences and higher-quality work with lower risk.

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