

CASE STUDIES

Proof in Practice



How a Town Digitized Workflows and Saved 12 Hours a Week

Turning paper bottlenecks into process flow.

CONTEXT

The Town of Paradise, a growing municipality just outside St. John's, was experiencing the same challenge as many small Canadian towns: expanding services and expectations without expanding staff capacity. Every permit, invoice, and form still moved on paper. Staff in administration, finance, and engineering spent hours filing, tracking, and hunting for documents instead of serving residents.

In 2020, as remote work became essential, the Town launched a digital-workflow modernization project to improve productivity and transparency across departments.

THE CHALLENGE

Paradise's manual processes were slowing down operations:

- Paper-heavy workflows: More than 75 percent of municipal transactions required printing and scanning.
- Lost time: Employees in finance and development spent 10–15 hours a week retrieving files or following up on missing signatures.
- Limited visibility: Managers couldn't see where items were delayed or who had pending approvals.
- Space & storage costs: Physical filing cabinets consumed valuable office space.

"Our people were working hard, but so much effort was lost chasing paper instead of results."

— Director of Corporate Services, Town of Paradise

APPROACH

Mapping the Old Workflow

With support from Ricoh Canada's digital-solutions team, Paradise documented how each form, from procurement to by-law enforcement, flowed through the system. Visual maps revealed repeated data entry, redundant reviews, and inconsistent approval paths.

Re-designing for Flow

Using the Laserfiche electronic content-management (ECM) platform, the Town automated form submission, routing, and storage.

- Staff completed digital forms online rather than by hand.
- Approvals were triggered automatically based on department rules.
- Records were stored in a central repository searchable in seconds.

Training and Change Management

Paradise invested in short "digital-confidence" sessions for staff. Each department nominated workflow champions who served as peer coaches. Leaders emphasized that the project wasn't about cutting jobs — it was about creating capacity.

Tracking Progress

The Town used simple before-and-after time tracking to measure gains. Employees logged how long tasks such as invoice routing, records retrieval, and permit filing took pre- and post-digitization.

RESULTS

Within one year of implementation, the transformation delivered measurable results:

Area	Before	After	Improvement
Average back-office task time	10 days	6 days	40 % faster
Search time for records	20 min	< 5 min	75 % faster
Re-keying of data	Frequent	Eliminated	100 % reduced
Overall administrative capacity	Baseline	≈ 12 hours/week saved per team	+30 % productivity

Departments reported higher morale and fewer missed deadlines. Staff described the shift as freeing them to focus on resident service rather than paperwork.

"It's not just faster, it's clearer. Everyone knows where the work is."

— Records Management Coordinator, Town of Paradise

LESSONS LEARNED

- 1. Visual mapping creates ownership.**
Staff buy-in grew once they saw waste made visible.
- 2. Digital doesn't mean complicated.**
Simple online forms and clear routing achieved 80 percent of the benefit.
- 3. Peer champions sustain change.**
Local advocates helped staff stay confident through the transition.
- 4. Measure and celebrate time saved.**
Quantifying gains turned small wins into long-term momentum.

PRACTICAL TAKEAWAYS

- Start by mapping one paper-based workflow end-to-end.
- Choose an ECM or form-automation tool that integrates with existing systems.
- Train staff early; confidence accelerates adoption.
- Track and share “time-back” metrics to demonstrate value.
- Reinforce that productivity means creating space for higher-value work.

REFERENCES

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Share your thoughts, your examples

We are always looking forward to learn as a community.

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