Best Practices for Improving Business Workflows

Whether you realize it or not, all businesses have workflows - some manual and some automated. A workflow consists of a pattern of business activities put into motion to help process information. With a series of steps that need to be completed sequentially, workflows enable businesses to realize important objectives, such as approving purchase requests or employee onboarding.

Often, workflows can become more complicated as a business grows. While many organizations still use manual workflow methods, automated document workflows streamline any process by following structured, time-saving activities. In fact, business process management software enables businesses to design unique workflows that improve data collection and analysis, with minimal user intervention - if any! By taking the time to build business workflows, you are developing more efficient ways to keep your workforce organized and productive. Let's explore best practices for creating document workflows in your business.

1. **Discuss and analyze current processes.** There may be manual workflows in place across different departments that you are not aware of! This is why it is important to analyze the activities of your workforce to get an idea of what collaborative document processes look like in your organization. Study the chain of events in your current manual processes. This would mean understanding the exact jobs being done, who is responsible for what, and how long it takes to complete a full workflow cycle. Another important factor is to understand the project objectives and ultimate end goals of each document process. Some processes might involve multiple departments and employees. They need to be properly monitored and optimized to make sure they're as efficient as they can be.

2. **Identify bottlenecks and process inefficiencies.** Once you've reviewed current process workflows, you must measure their efficiency. Are tasks completed in a reasonable time? Are the appropriate employees being notified? To identify possible improvement points, you need to detect weaknesses at each stage of the process. If you don't measure your team's current status, you'll have no idea where the bottlenecks are and how to fix them. Will adding an automated reminder help? Is there an extra step needed that could smooth out the process? Or are there too many steps, which are complicating matters? Remember there is always room for process improvements.

3. **Leverage Business Process Automation to streamline workflow.** One of the most important practices of document management is the use of Business Process Automation (BPA) software. BPA offers so much more than document workflow routing, with the ability to easily map your

processes, securely define the flow of information, enforce business rules, and maintain critical insight. Valuable data is gathered during the automated business process and then analyzed to show where and for how long information is within a process, allowing for improved business intelligence. That data can be analyzed shared with other business applications, providing you with full process visibility from document capture to archival. With BPA, you can rest assured your document processes are complete, accurate and timely.

It is important for business owners to establish effective channels of communication across departments. By implementing digital document workflows in your organization, you will open the door to higher productivity, collaboration and efficiency. If you're ready to learn more about Business Process Automation solutions, contact Square 9 today to schedule a live demonstration!

Marketing Communications Manager **Lauren Ford** is the dynamic voice behind Square 9 Softworks. Delivering highly effective messaging across reseller channels, end user communities and outside agencies, Ford develops, drives and executes communication plans that effectively support Square 9's overall marketing goals and objectives. To learn more visit www.square-9.com.