Union Reduces Overtime and Eliminates Manual Data Entry with AI-Powered Dues Processing

Industry:
Union, Non-Profit

Company:
Service Employees International Union, Local 6
Departments Impacted: Administration

Objective:
Accurately capture, process, and archive handwritten information for use in audits and other solutions.

SEIU6
Property Services NW

About Service Employees International Union, Local 6

Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 6 represents janitors, security officers, and airport workers across the Washington area. SEIU serves more than 2 million members, with 10,000 at Local 6 alone.

Consistently at the forefront of human rights, SEIU was among the first unions to include leadership from immigrants, women, and African Americans, and continues to advance these rights in the workplace. The organization is dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families to create a more just and humane society.

Challenge

Operating in high-turnover industries, SEIU Local 6 undergoes significant membership fluctuations as members switch companies. Despite this, each membership card received must be retained for life.

"During the holidays, we can see as many as 1,000 new members per month, but we may only need 500 of those cards," explains Jessica Higbee, Director of Administration at SEIU 6.

Each of these cards must be reviewed, processed, and archived, and the information contained must be entered into additional systems.

The initial process for entering this data was slow, error-prone, and manual.

"We'd get an application, and the only way to import it into our system was for someone to sit there and type the information in," says Higbee.

These applications are also written in more than 30 different languages, making it far more challenging to enter them accurately.

"There was a lot of guesswork that went into processing these applications," says Higbee. We'd often have to ask ourselves 'Is that a 7 or a 1?'"

The retention requirements for these union cards created significant storage and accessibility challenges for SEIU 6.

"We have cards going back to almost the 30s," explains Higbee. "What happens if I run out of space?" What if the building burns down?"

The need to simplify these processes and alleviate staff challenges in the most cost-effective way led SEIU 6 to seek new solutions.

The Solution

After switching IT services to Sharp, the company recommended Square 9 as a potential solution. SEIU 6 explored several alternatives independently but found these solutions lacked the capability to fully meet their needs.

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"I did one other demo and realized Square 9 was vastly different in what they can do and customize for us. I didn't want to start with a band-aid solution. I wanted something that actually works."

_____ *Jessica Higbee, Director of Administration*

During implementation, Square 9 began testing and training its AI-powered capture tools on sample union cards provided by SEIU. "I was blown away with how little they needed from me," says Higbee.

The project was completed over several weeks, with frequent updates and communication with the SEIU 6 team.

"I feel like the project was completed so quickly," says Higbee. "My background is in software implementation, and Square 9 is the easiest software in my 15 years that I have ever implemented."

In addition, SEIU began implementing electronic dues cards, further reducing handwriting challenges and improving data accuracy.

The Benefits

Square 9's AI-powered platform allowed SEIU 6 to accurately lift handwritten information from documents, a unique capability that proved invaluable. The custom workflow capabilities of Square 9 solutions also significantly aided SEIU 6, enabling them to format data for seamless transfer to other systems.

By exporting the captured data to a spreadsheet, it could be uploaded to SEIU's dues processing solution with minimal manual handling.

Square 9's AI capture tools also eliminated the guesswork when reading handwriting and multi-language applications.

By extracting the information cleanly, SEIU staff had a much clearer understanding of the information on each card.

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"To have one company handle all of these challenges in a way that was so simple. Square 9 made a problem that felt so impossible so easy and so painless."

_____ *Jessica Higbee, Director of Administration*

With the ability to automatically capture, classify, and archive documents, SEIU 6 can now store all member cards digitally, making them easy to locate for audits.

SEIU 6 even now has a digital form to complete membership application cards, allowing members to forgo handwritten documents altogether.

The Results

Higbee was initially concerned about the learning curve for the new solution, but the complimentary training helped her and her team hit the ground running.

"I had planned for a month of onboarding my team with Square 9, but they understood the solution in a week," says Higbee.

In the 4 months since launching with Square 9, Higbee's team has been able to reduce overtime by about 10 hours a month. The staff that processes dues has also been able to take on additional tasks, such as reporting, that drive greater value for SEIU 6.

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"It gives my team hours of their life back. I feel like it's given us at least 15 hours a month."

_____ *Jessica Higbee, Director of Administration*

When asked what about Square 9, she's most impressed with, Higbee's answer was clear: "How easy it is," she stated. "I've worked with so many companies over the years, and it's been so painless; the ease of setting it up, the ease of use, and the ease of training…It's such a beautiful, perfect solution."

Higbee has already recommended Square 9 to several local organizations with smaller dues departments. When asked what she tells them, she stated, "Square 9 is willing to build your software that actually solves your problems. They'll work with you, they'll adapt to what you want, and we're only using a few facets."