

CASE STUDY

COLE

Cole Engineering Group Ltd.

Background

Cole Engineering Group Ltd. (COLE) provides consulting and advisory services in planning, engineering in the water, transportation, urban development and environmental sectors. With offices across southern Ontario, COLE is now one of the largest independent consulting engineering firms in the province.

Problem

COLE works on a range of projects, with diverse teams constantly under pressure to deliver to deadlines. Their Project Managers use leading industry technology for project management but, they were using a combination of methods to process project emails, including Microsoft's public folders and staff organising their own inboxes through a list of folders inside Outlook.

As a result, COLE had team members working together on individual projects, all organising their emails in different ways where they were only accessible to each person from their own inboxes. The team did not have the access to all the project emails they needed.

Some of the senior engineers raised concerns over COLE's ability to respond to E-Discovery re-

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Location

Canada

quests due to the volume of emails locked in individual's inboxes including commercially sensitive information that couldn't be accessed.

COLE surveyed key staff to understand business challenges around email and found that project teams felt held back by their inability to access all project emails from one place. They felt time was wasted searching for information and were finding it challenging to cope with continually evolving projects.

Requirement

COLE initially felt that an email archiving tool would provide the solution they needed, but quickly found this would not enable project teams to work any more efficiently. After consulting Project Managers, it was discovered that a solution focused on the filing and searching of emails that didn't require large amounts of investment was required.

Mail Manager, the Outlook add-in developed by Arup was identified by COLE's IT department as a potential solution and was demonstrated to the Project Managers. It was immediately identified as something which had the potential to reduce the level of risk COLE was exposed to as well as transform the day to day working of project teams.

Mail Manager allows our team to be connected at all times and informed of project progress. The access to historic information has provided our team the ability to deliver timely responses to sensitive matters for our clients".

Jannette Risi, Senior Project Administrator

Decision Process

COLE put together a pilot group to trial the software, the objective of this being to prove a business case internally based on the consistency of filing and the return delivered through fee earners time being saved.

Mail Manager was initially deployed across 22 staff including 4 Project Managers, which allowed COLE to understand how it would help their project teams and improve their project delivery.

Business Case

COLE's business case centred around reducing the risk of the business not being able to retrieve project emails, the time spent searching for information, and fundamentally making work easier for staff.

After trialling Mail Manager for a month, they discovered that:

- Mail Manager saved a significant amount of time for all staff, especially the project managers.
- The Project Managers saved a greater amount of time searching for information and also reduced the time spent on project administration.
- New members of the project team were able to seamlessly join, and quickly get up to speed on the projects progress by having all project information in one place.
- There was significant opportunity to find information by individual projects that could prevent potentially very expensive one off costs within a project.

The IT team's involvement in email retrieval could be reduced with staff being able to access any email on any of their projects in a matter of seconds.

Implementation

COLE had many internal projects competing for resource and didn't want a protracted change project.

Mail Manager can easily and rapidly be implemented across a business as the add-in is intuitive for staff to use without training, and it was deployed across COLE's existing infrastructure in a few weeks to 250 staff.

Results

After an internal review based on real usage information from the trial, COLE were able to demonstrate that Mail Manager paid for itself within a few months of purchase, based on staff time saving and efficiency gains.

Today, Mail Manager is being used consistently across the entire business by all teams including corporate services, who now file their project emails centrally and consistently.

All teams are now empowered by being able to search and retrieve over 2 million filed emails and growing, which historically they would never have had access to.

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