

2011 Records Management Best Practice Application

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NACRC 2011 BEST PRACTICES SUBMISSION

RECORDER MAIL PROCESSING

Background

In 2009, the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) identified areas where costs could be reduced to meet the County's goal of saving through efficiency initiatives while preserving current record maintenance/issuance service levels to the public.

The Department's recorder mail services operation, responsible for mailing recorded documents, proved to be an area where customer service could be improved while reducing costs. Mail processing handled through Los Angeles County's Internal Service Department (ISD) and outsourced to an independent contractor for the last twenty-five years was redirected within the RR/CC's Mail Services Unit to improve customer service and reduce costs by using internal staff for mail processing and implementing alternate mail preparation standards.

The Problem

A cost analysis was performed to determine potential departmental savings by processing mail services in-house instead of using an outside contractor. The prior recorder mail procedures required a four to five day mail processing timeframe. Mail was prepared by RR/CC staff for next day pick-up by ISD and then delivered on the following day to a contractor for processing. Depending on the contractor's workload, the mail was processed within one or two days and then delivered to the United States Postal Service. After reviewing the contractor's services, it was determined that the four to five day timeframe for mail processing could be expedited to same day service if processed through the RR/CC's Mailroom Services Unit. In-house mail services would entail RR/CC staff processing the mail and delivering it to the Post Office by 4:30 p.m. each work day, thus eliminating the need and associated costs of utilizing an independent contractor. The "Recorder Mail Processing Program" addresses two major needs:

- 1) Prompt delivery of service is a standard that customers demand; therefore, organizations must focus on this need to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction.
- 2) Ongoing review of methods and tools available to enhance mail preparation practices that result in lowering postage and processing expenses.

Program Description and Objectives

Recorder and Administration Bureau management collaborated in 2009 to bring in-house recorder mail processing that was previously sent to a contractor mailing house for metering and mailing. This project entailed conducting an analysis to determine the feasibility of processing recorder mail through the Mailroom Services Unit. Additionally it required developing timelines and reports, preparing costs and savings estimates that were used to provide recommendations to improve mailing methods. The project also required the development of new procedures and spreadsheets for tracking monthly savings.

Several pilot tests were performed to mail test samples using Recorder and Administration Bureau employees to identify the delivery timeframes for both Internal Services Department and RR/CC's Mailroom Services Unit. All pilots demonstrated an improved mail timeframe when compared to the outsourced mailing house.

This new procedure enables the Department to eliminate the need for outsourcing mail while increasing efficiency and customer service. The "Recorder Mail Processing Program" objectives were:

- 1) Reduce the mail delivery timeframe for recorded documents mailed to customers;
- 2) Eliminate costly administrative and processing charges, and
- 3) Maximize the use of existing equipment and human resources to enhance mail processing.

Project Implementation

Once pilot tests were conducted, the implementation of this project took approximately four months. The following is an outline of the implementation plan:

- Conduct Phase 1 Pilot to test mail delivery timeframes from two sections
- Prepare Cost and Savings Analysis
- Conduct Phase 2 Pilot to test mail samples from entire division

- Order meter machine supplies to handle increased mail volume
- Conduct Implementation Kick-Off Meeting
- Schedule meeting with ISD Contact Analyst to address procedures to discontinue services
- Mail notification letter to discontinue mail services from ISD
- Tune-up Mailroom equipment to prepare for increased mail volume
- Train staff on new mail preparation procedures and monthly savings report
- Prepare implementation notification to departmental managers
- Conduct one week test Trail-Run prior to implementation
- Publish monthly savings report

Technology Required

The program did not require investing in new technology. However, the existing technology utilized is listed below:

Equipment/Hardware:

Equipment

(2) Pitney Bowes Meter Machines, Model - DM 1000

CPU

Celeron ® D 3.20GHz, 504 MB of Ram

Software:

Pitney Bowes – Ascent, Mail Center Management Version 7.90.06.00

Program Costs

No additional costs.

Program Success and Best Practice

The Recorder Mail Processing Project has proven to be a successful cost effective program which enhanced property records mail processing and increased efficiency within the Department's Recorder Bureau while enhancing services to Los Angeles County residents.

Establishing this project improved mail delivery by one business day allowing the Department to meet return mail deadlines and avoid mail processing administrative fees

charged by the contract mailing house. Utilizing RR/CC Mailroom Unit staff to process the mail has resulted in up to \$200,000 in annual cost savings. This new procedure enables the Department to eliminate the need for outsourcing service while increasing efficiency and customer service.