To continually examine our processes to provide greater value to our customers without waste.

Reducing Storage, Increasing Efficiency, Eliminating Waste

A wise man once stated: "You can't do today's job, with yesterday's methods, and be in business tomorrow." For many years, the Operating & Maintenance (O&M) Manuals from jobs we completed were filed in big 3-ring binders and placed on bookshelves for reference as needed. It was not the most efficient way, but people eventually found what they needed when they needed it. About 2½ years ago, the Service Department organized and labeled the binders and bookshelves, and then put together an index so the correct binder could be found quicker, based on the lettered bookshelf and the numbered binder.

Over 500 binders took up 9 shelving units that were 5 shelves high. When we remodeled the headquarters office last year, everyone put O&M binders away that may have been stored in their offices or elsewhere, and we ended up with over-flowing bookshelves. One of the Service Department's cubicles was filled with O&M manuals on bookshelves, besides a spill over of bookshelves along the east wall.

Since one of our goals in our remodeling was to increase space for an expanded workforce while staying within our current real estate square footage, we looked more seriously at electronic filing and have started to make some in-roads in that direction.

One of the first projects completed was to place all the O&M Manuals on computer files. We enlisted 2 part-time helpers to scan the material, electronically index all the files, and finally make CD's and disk labels as a manual back-up to the computer files. Since this wasn't a full-time endeavor, the process took about 3 months to complete.

We ended up with lots of extra binders and index tabs that we placed in our office supply inventory for use on other projects. The wasted storage space of the O&M manuals was reduced to 2 small CD cabinets along the east wall. This allowed the other cubicle that stored bookshelves to be reconfigured to an employee's work space.

People can now find the O&M data quickly and efficiently by just pulling up the respective file on their computer from the company network drive. This saves people from the waste of walking over to the bookshelves and searching for the binder they need. The database uses the same numbering system that Service set up for the hard binders, but there will be a searchable feature in the computer whereby people can search by project address, name, job #, etc. for faster retrieval in the future.

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