

Pharmaceuticals Manufacturer



Intelligent Document Conversion Protects the Intellectual Property of a Leading Pharmaceuticals Firm

- CUSTOMER:** The customer is one of the world's leading pharmaceuticals manufacturers.
- CHALLENGE:** The company needed an effective solution for converting to digital form approximately 25 million paper-based intellectual property documents, which were spread across 10 locations.
- SOLUTION:** Iron Mountain teamed up with one of our premiere scanning partners to provide a comprehensive document conversion process for digitizing and storing essential documents, ensuring their security and extending their lives.
- BENEFIT:** Stored in a centralized database - at less cost yet with more control than before - these high-value assets are now better managed and protected and more easily accessed.

The Customer

Headquartered in the Eastern U.S., the customer is one of the world's largest companies, earning more than \$50 billion in annual revenues. The company discovers and develops medicines designed to help people live longer, more fulfilling lives. It also manufactures and distributes a range of consumer health care products.

The Challenge

Because of the company's long history, range of business lines, and ongoing commitment to innovation, it has amassed a vast number of patents and other intellectual property (IP) documents. The company estimated it had roughly 25 million documents (enough to fill 12,660 cartons) distributed over 10 US locations.

In the intensely competitive pharmaceuticals field, patents are of supreme value. They are not only the underlying source of clinical benefits but also the foundation of business value. Additionally, they often serve as an important line of defense in patent disputes and other litigation.

In this company's case, IP documents were not being managed effectively. The large quantity and dispersed location of the documents made it difficult to quickly find, retrieve and share specific files. In many cases, only the original paper documents existed, and they weren't being preserved and protected to the extent they should have been.

The Solution

The company was seeking a solution that would digitally image all these documents – with appropriate indexing, tracking, and online security – and store the originals in a secure location. Among all the vendors competing for the project, only Iron Mountain, working in partnership with a global scanning partner, was able to handle the logistical challenges posed by the sheer volume of documents and the number of storage locations.

One primary goal was to maintain a secure chain of custody so that no records were lost or left vulnerable during the imaging process. Iron Mountain's long experience and proven best practices ensured consistent processes of the highest integrity across all of the company's locations.

While the actual scanning would be performed at the partner's centralized document imaging facility, Iron Mountain would provide a range of pre- and post-scan services and manage storage of the paper-based originals once the imaging project was completed. One primary goal was to maintain a secure chain of custody during the entire scanning process so that no records would be lost or left vulnerable. Iron Mountain's long experience and proven best practices ensured consistent processes of the highest integrity across all of the company's locations.

Pre-scanning. As the first step in the imaging process, Iron Mountain's staff went on-site at all 10 customer locations and systematically removed existing bar-coded files from open-shelf storage. The bar codes for the individual files were scanned (though not the files themselves), and the files were then packed in storage cartons, which were also bar-coded. This process created a file-level inventory of all the documents that would eventually be scanned.

After being verified for accuracy, the cartons were sealed and shipped to a secure Iron Mountain facility. There, carton-level data was scanned into Iron Mountain's SafeKeeperPlus inventory control system, and the file-level data that had already been collected was loaded into the system as well. "Marrying" these two types of data would allow individual documents to be tracked, down to the carton and file level, greatly speeding online searches and document retrieval. The cartons were then dispatched to the partner's imaging center by secure third-party transportation.

Document scanning. At the imaging facility, the documents were logged in – to verify they had been received – and were prepared, scanned, and indexed. A rigorous, post-scan quality check ensured that all documents had been successfully converted to digital form. Because of the huge conversion capacity employed, significant scanning volumes could be processed quickly, shortening the total project time.

Imaged image files were then uploaded to an image archive, which allows authorized users anywhere in the world to access digital copies of IP documents, provided they have the appropriate user privileges.

Paper records storage. Once the imaging process was completed, the paper documents were sent to an Iron Mountain site, where they are stored in a highly secure, environmentally controlled facility. On those occasions when the original paper records are required, a user can submit their request online, and Iron Mountain retrieves the file and delivers it via secure transport, with the chain of custody documented from end to end.

The Benefit

With its millions of intellectual property documents converted into digital images – which are more durable and easier to store, identify, and access – the company has realized savings in administrative costs and storage space, and now has centralized control over these important records. Originals are safely stored off-site, and the images are available for discovery requests and other needs. Because they are in digital format, documents are easier to share and distribute among authorized users across many different locations. At the same time, they are easier to protect through encryption and other electronic security methods.

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