



INDUSTRY

Public Sector

CHALLENGE

Double the rate of file reviews while adhering to the exacting demands of HM Treasury and The National Archives (TNA)

SOLUTION

Skilled Iron Mountain on-site employees conduct sensitivity reviews while Iron Mountain off-site employees prepare files to send to TNA

VALUE

- Improved reporting and progress tracking
- Consistent delivery against targets
- Compliance with stringent TNA standards for permanent record preservation

CASE STUDY

HM TREASURY

PREPARING GOVERNMENT FILES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS

SHORTER TIMESCALES AND INCREASED WORKLOADS

All government departments have large amounts of historical paperwork - and HM Treasury is no exception. It's the ministry responsible for setting UK economic policy, achieving economic growth and controlling public spending. Iron Mountain® is its records management supplier.

The Public Records Act shortened the review cycle for government files from 30 to 20 years. Reviewed documents with historic value are permanently preserved in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew in West London. HM Treasury needs to complete the transition to the 20-year rule by 2024.

This means HM Treasury has had to double the rate at which it reviews its files. Costa Panayiodou, Transfer Programme Manager, says: "We designed a new process to manage the accelerated timescales and the increased workload. That allowed us to go out to tender with the best possible insight into our needs."

CLOSE COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK

One important requirement was providing on-site as well as off-site resources. Over a three-year period, HM Treasury planned to review 35,000 files, of which around 6,500 would be sensitive in nature. Close collaboration was essential. The successful supplier would have to station its employees at the ministry's premises for the project's duration.

Equally significant was meeting stringent TNA standards on the presentation of files sent there. The supplier's staff had to have the skills to work with files requiring sensitivity reviews too. The physical security of the documents, both in situ and in transit, was also vital.

Iron Mountain was awarded the contract because it achieved the highest score in the tender exercise. In particular, Iron Mountain showed they understood the requirements and could provide a high-quality service that offered value for money.

"We've developed good relationships with Iron Mountain at all levels," says Costa Panayiodou. "Not only did they tick all the boxes, they also proved the ability to deliver to the necessary standards and their familiarity with each process step."

RIGOROUS SENSITIVITY REVIEWS

The first stage of the process begins with a joint audit by HM Treasury and TNA. That identifies which files should be permanently preserved. Those where retention is deemed no longer necessary are stored by Iron Mountain until HM Treasury authorises their destruction.

The second stage of the process includes a review by HM Treasury to decide which records need additional sensitivity reviews. Files so identified are then reviewed by on-site Iron Mountain employees under HM Treasury supervision.

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Costa Panayiodou
Transfer Programme Manager
HM Treasury

At the third stage, all files chosen for preservation are prepared to TNA standards. It’s a rigorous procedure - with no less than 42 pages of guidance - to ensure documents can be kept in perpetuity. And, even then, TNA carries out its own quality control inspections before files are transferred to Kew.

From day one, Iron Mountain demonstrated deep understanding of the requirements and activities involved in the programme. The company’s service levels consistently match the exacting demands of the review process, particularly at the critical second and third stages.

CLEAR PROGRESS TRACKING

The Iron Mountain team is also proving adept at managing the three-way collaboration with HM Treasury and TNA. Most pleasing to the ministry’s Knowledge and Information Management group is the fact that the programme is on schedule. Progress can be easily tracked in the comprehensive custom reports generated on-demand by Iron Mountain.

“We always know exactly where we are, because the Iron Mountain reports contain just the right amount of detail,” says Costa Panayiodou.

SOUND DECISION-MAKING

Sensitivity reviews are also being well handled. This part of the process seeks to avoid personal or confidential information appearing in the public domain. Four Iron Mountain employees help with this, looking for sensitive material according to the ministry’s guidance and producing full reports on each file. These reports are discussed in workshops led by the Sensitivity Review Manager at HM Treasury before a final decision is taken.

“Sensitivity reviews require sound judgement as well as attention to detail. All the individuals from Iron Mountain are performing well on both counts,” says Costa Panayiodou. “I’m confident we’re consistently making the right decisions in this testing area.”

In fact, HM Treasury is highly satisfied with all aspects of the Iron Mountain service. “The Iron Mountain team is great to work with and we fully expect to deliver against our targets for this year’s transfer programme,” concludes Costa Panayiodou.

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ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN

Iron Mountain operates in major markets worldwide, serving thousands of customers throughout the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Asia Pacific and Latin America. For more information, visit our website at www.ironmountain.co.uk or at www.ironmountain.ie

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Iron Mountain UK:
Third Floor, Cottons Centre
Tooley Street, London, SE1 2TT
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 8445 60 70 80
www.ironmountain.co.uk

Iron Mountain Ireland:
Damastown Avenue,
Damastown Industrial Estate,
Dublin 15, Eire
+353 (0) 1861 3900
www.ironmountain.ie