

Matamata-Piako District Council delivers on strategic sustainability goals

CHALLENGE

Matamata-Piako District Council has been on a digital transformation journey since 2016. Their initial goal was to have fully digital council meetings – including minutes, agendas, reports and contracts that need to be distributed and signed through elected representatives.

The outcome they wanted to achieve was an efficient green solution for circulating and approving documentation and items, which also helped them achieve their broader strategic sustainability goal to reduce carbon emissions.

Even though they had progressed to generating council meeting content digitally, each month they still needed to print documents, then courier these packs to councillors (using 3 x cars as they all lived in different directions). This not only took a lot of time to orchestrate, but also had a cost associated with paper, printing, couriers and storing files – not to mention carbon emissions from the couriers.

Primary drivers for going digital were:

- Amount of **time** spent transferring information to and from councillors across the district.
- **Money** spent on producing agendas and minutes, contracts, postage and people.
- The **physical storage and filing** of documents, such as minute books.
- **Sustainability goals** to reduce paper and transportation costs to protect the environment.

SOLUTION

Following extensive research and reviews of other products over a couple of years, Matamata-Piako District Council selected Secured Signing, and has been using it since October 2019. The initial phases of the digitisation project revolved around planning, cost-analysis and educating staff on how the adoption of digital signing would heavily benefit their day-to-day activities.

Secured Signing's platform allows council staff, councillors and constituents to fill-in and sign legally binding documents, from any device, anywhere, at any time. These documents are secured the moment they are signed by Secured Signing's use of PKI digital signature technology. Once the document's first signature has taken place, the document is "sealed" securing the document, meaning no edits can take place.

From an audit and compliance perspective, this was a huge benefit and provided Matamata-Piako District Council with peace of mind, knowing Secured Signing had them covered against tampering and unwanted modifications. Secured Signing was easy to use, understand and implement. Its form builder was intuitive and allowed the full digitisation of documents. One-off or multiple use documents could be created, dependent on demand. This allowed Matamata-Piako District Council to modify documents such as Standing Orders and enabled the full digitisation of agendas & minutes.

Adoption of the platform was made easy by the fact that signers of documents did not need to have a license of Secured Signing's platform to sign any documents.

RESULTS

Meeting minutes and agendas fully digitised for signing – saving on paper, postage and physical storage. Using Secured Signing keeps things managed, visible and ensures the person that is signing documents off, has the right delegative authority to sign. Secured Signing enabled MPDC to get rid of paper processes and move to a holistic digital process for filling out forms and capturing signatures, allowing them to meet their sustainable strategic goals.

\$26,276 approximated savings per annum through the reduction:

- ➔ of paper used in meetings and contract documents.
- ➔ in courier and postage costs associated with monthly council meetings.
- ➔ in time spent preparing, sending, and signing documents.

KEY INSIGHTS

•➔ **Involve as many teams as possible**

Even if teams are not willing to move forward with digital signing, keep them in the loop to ensure they are aware of the product. As they begin to hear all of the benefits and become comfortable with the idea, confidence builds and teams begin to raise their hand to be a part of the digitisation process.

•➔ **Workshop your processes**

Demonstrate to your team where the product (Secured Signing) will sit, at what point documents need signing, by who, etc. Once this has been clarified, a seamless process of adopting digital signing can take place as there is clarity of the process in the first place, it makes digitizing it much easier.

•➔ **Blind decision-makers with the maths.**

Do your own research into the true costs of your current processes. What is it costing you now?

These will include things such as:

- Photocopier costs.
- Stationery – envelopes, binding materials, etc.
- Courier and postage costs.
- Fleet vehicles (booking system records - driver and team codes).
- Staff time (document collation, delivery, chasing up for signatures).

Calculate how much you can save:

- Project savings for binding minutes and agendas (including contracts binding and specialist minutes binding)
- Project annualised savings for offsite storage of contracts & minutes.

•➔ **Be flexible**

The ability to operate in a digital environment allows business to continue as usual. The effects of COVID-19 were dampened as the transition into working-from-home and social distancing practices were able to be observed while utilising the digital signing of documents. The transfer of information was unhindered, allowing people to get things done.

•➔ **Get a good champion.**

Get someone in the organisation who is genuinely interested in what is going on, who won't back off, and will continue to drive the project.

“ Being able to do things digitally, we know the moment of signing, we can verify the identity... when contracts can be worth 5 - 15 million dollars, you need to be able to prove legitimacy over who is signing the document.”

KEY FACTORS FOR CHOOSING SECURED SIGNING

- ✓ Scalable up or down depending on each use case; the product accommodates teams and documents of all sizes providing cost benefits on either end.
- ✓ Sustainable in an environmental perspective; reduction of paper and transportation use.
- ✓ Secure; provide document integrity and security on everything that is digitally signed.
- ✓ Customisable; meet the needs of the Democracy team but also People & Wellness, Contracts, Building, etc.
- ✓ Delivered against a number of key strategies, including the need for digital signing within their digitisation strategy; Corporate Information Strategy, Communication Strategy and Overall Information Technology Strategy.

DEPARTMENTS AND USE CASES

People & Wellness

Democracy | Committee secretaries.

Building | Building administration team.

Contracts | Procurement officer and contracts officer.

Planning

Food Verification

Liquor Licensing

Finance | New creditor forms.

HR | Contracts, standard internal forms.

Internal Contracting | Engagement with private works.

“ It (the Secured Signing platform) just made life an awful lot easier.

“ We found that the savings we could make by going fully digital, just in the Democracy space, was enough to cover the cost of getting the product, Secured Signing, and paying the fees that we needed to. It also covered off the cost of supplying all of our councilors and the Mayor with devices... the cost of the communication hub... the IT behind that... and all of the Office 365 licenses.



About Matamata-Piako District Council

Matamata-Piako District Council has just over 200 full-time equivalent employees (FTE's), 11 councilors and the Mayor. Their core information systems include Authority, Content Manager and infocouncil. Most staff are using Win10 Office 2016, with the councilors on Office 365.

The Matamata-Piako District covers 175,000 hectares in the central Waikato and is well known for dairy farming and thoroughbred racing industry. The district has a population of 35,000 people, over 56% live in one of the three main towns - Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha.

To learn more about Matamata-Piako District Council visit www.mpdcc.govt.nz

About Secured Signing

Secured Signing provides a one-stop digital signature service that delivers a full range of form completion and eSigning capabilities. Using advanced personalised X509 PKI Digital Signature technology, it is more secure than a plain electronic signature.

Secured Signing enables its users to use any device to capture their graphical signature, fill-in, sign, seal and verify documents anywhere, anytime. The solution streamlines business processes, cuts back on expenses, expedites delivery cycles, improves staff efficiency, and enhances customer service in a green environment.

To learn more about Secured Signing visit www.securedsigning.com, or contact us on info@securedsigning.com.



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