

The trend towards digital file management



THE recent Canterbury earthquake should serve as a warning to engineering firms to digitally capture their records, blueprints and plans. Many service providers scrambled to access structural plans following the devastating 7.1 magnitude earthquake.

"As the natural disaster highlighted, you can't guarantee you'll be able to access your physical site and files and need to ensure crucial documents are available in such an event," says Stephen Beighton, a director of Desktop Imaging.

"Digital capture is a timely concern for organisations. People often forget just how integral records are to their day to day business operations or are put off by the initial scale and scope of the project, but that's why we have specialised in-house project managers."

One company that has recently

gone digital is Opus International Consultants, which until 2009 accessed South Island bridge plans on microfilm using a special reader and printer. Their continued use of the microfilm, combined with its age, meant Opus had to take steps to preserve its valuable plans by converting them to digital format.

During 2009 and early 2010, Desktop Imaging used its specialist microform scanners to convert Opus's plans to PDF files in batches of 500 at a time. The resulting high-quality PDF files are now easily accessible on Opus International's management system and are backed up and supported by Opus's IT infrastructure.

Digital files allow the fast and flexible retrieval of documents internally and externally.

Beighton says digitisation gives businesses an opportunity to establish new and efficient working methods and become more responsive to their customers' needs.

Many paper-based organisations relying on detailed plans, graphs and images or who are bound to store files by legislation are also motivated by confidentiality and security, business continuity and smart record storage.

Desktop Imaging is seeing an increasing trend towards digital record management as one way of achieving efficient operations and resource use. ● Go to www.demm.co.nz/

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Expo provides business boost

THE country's premier business gathering for the food and packaging sectors, held last October, was a resounding success, with nearly 3100 industry professionals visiting Foodtech Packtech 2010. Sector exhibitors have reported strong sales as a result of the show, supporting the view that food and related businesses will help New Zealand get through the current global economic problems.

Shaughan Syme, of food processing machinery specialist Symetec, says they've been involved with the Foodtech side of the event since 1996. "This was a great event. We were kept busy, with a stream of visitors over the three days.

"Exhibitions are a fantastic business tool. They not only allow you to present new products to the market, but are also a quick way to meet quality new customers," he says.

"One thing I noticed was a shift in the dynamics of the show. At previous events there have seemed to be about 60-70% food processing machinery, and a small amount of packaging machinery and materials. This 2010 show seemed to be weighted much heavier to the packaging side than I've previously noticed – I'd say almost the complete opposite with packaging being the greater percentage.

Ben Hickey of Colorite Group says Foodtech Packtech allowed

the company to illustrate why it is a packaging leader. "It was also a great opportunity to introduce to a targeted audience our unique integrated packaging design model that operates from strategic design to print. We found that Foodtech Packtech was an excellent environment to have some in-depth discussions around the benefits of this integrated model with some key decision-makers. The best thing about the show was the innovation and quality of stands. Food and packaging market leaders have really embraced the show.

"Foodtech Packtech is a great business tool for getting the industry together in one place and you can get a gauge on where different parts of the industry are heading. What worked for our stand was having something that intrigued. We broke all the rules of a trade show as no one had any idea who we were until they spoke with us. It did achieve our objective of creating a great first impression."

XPO's Vanessa White says reports from show visitors were also pleasing. "We had a lot of people say they got a lot from Foodtech Packtech, some even saying that it would be a long wait until 2012 for the next one. For us, the numbers speak for themselves. There were almost 3100 visitors and 170-plus exhibitors from Australia and further afield – not just New Zealand." ●

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