Beyond Records

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Contradictory to forecasts that the paperless office was on the horizon and would put records centers out of business, the commercial records center industry is alive and well and continues to grow. It is growing, not only in its ability to provide better and faster service to its hardcopy clients, but expanding in its capacity to service clients requiring related services. Secure document destruction is one such service. Particularly attractive due to the recurring revenue stream it generates for records centers, the document destruction industry is a multi-billion dollar industry and growing – at a rate anywhere from 10 to 35 percent annually, depending on which industry expert you're listening to. Any way you look at it, it's an industry on the rise and one that has caught the attention of many offsite records centers when examining smart ways to diversify and increase market share.

For records centers considering this avenue of business expansion, there is much to consider. A key consideration is ensuring the appropriate software solution is in place to properly service this segment of new business. Most important is selecting software that will function in concert with current operational requirements and, if possible, integrate with existing records center software. To date, ASI offers the only software designed and built specifically for the shredding industry that integrates with its commercial records center software as well. If the records center is operating with records center software that is not ASI's, Veri-Shred is still a smart solution. The advantages over other applications are many:

Shared hardware functionality
Veri-Shred allows records centers to use the same hardware, such as Windows Mobile$^{®}$ scanners to perform business functions. Other solutions require application-specific hardware which involves additional cost, training and service issues.

Similar business principle
The secure shredding industry is similar to the commercial records center industry in many ways. Accountability and security are paramount – and is a legal requirement in most cases. Efficient routing and streamlined workflow are critical. Veri-Shred's architecture reflects an understanding of the synergy between these business segments.

Consolidated invoicing
The last thing a client wants is multiple invoices, plus it creates additional work and cost for the records center. Like most records center software applications, Veri-Shred includes a billing interface for popular accounting software applications such as QuickBooks and utilizes your established accounting/GL codes. Its E-Billing functionality automatically emails invoices in PDF format to customers. If you are using another records center package, look at consolidating the billing information in your accounting system and then distribute the invoices from QuickBooks, for example.

Active in RC industry
While there are many similarities between the commercial records center and document destruction industries, each has its areas of distinction as well. A vendor should have a good grasp of the issues facing the records center industry and appreciate how these may impact or affect business. Active participation in both segments of the industry means there is an increased opportunity for a vendor to identify trends (good or bad) that can impact business (again, good or bad) and translate these into application enhancements going forward.

As you chart the next steps to propel your business forward, examine the feasibility of secure destruction services. It is a decision that can dramatically increase your client base, not to mention revenue. It can also create an incredible amount of angst and operational upheaval without the proper tools in place. The most significant of these tools would arguably be your shredding software. From transportation and routing to service orders and workflow, software represents the cornerstone of your new destruction business. With the appropriate software and other components in place, it can transform your commercial records center.