

Growing Pains

How the right software can help your business avoid angst and aggravation

By Scott Bidwell, ASI President & COO

If given the choice, most adults indicate the one period of their life they would choose not to relive is their adolescence. Apparently gawky insecurity, acne, and hormones that rival the world's best roller coaster rides are not aspects of growing up that many are anxious to revisit. For the majority of the population, their teenage years are truly their most challenging.

Could it be any different? Probably not, since growing up is a biological function not very well controlled by detailed planning. Luckily, this is not the case when it comes to starting or expanding a new business such as a records center.

For the sake of this article, we'll assume you've already established a viable business plan, funding and are taking the necessary steps to open for business. This is where it's critically important that you do your research and allocate resources where they can best work for your company. One area you do not want to skimp on is computers and software. These will be the backbone of your business, supporting operational, sales and service efficiency and success.

The software you settle on should deliver real-time information, mobile functionality, automated processes, and "cradle-to-grave" tracking of client information, to name a few. It should also be an integrated solution, growing with your business as you add ancillary services such as media storage and destruction. Integration is an important element to

consider when selecting the software solution for your records center. It can determine whether the growth of your business goes smoothly or is as awkward, sometimes painful, as those aforementioned teenage years.

Investing in long-term success without long-term business upset, is why many of today's most successful records centers choose Andrews Software. ASI's spectrum of software solutions are specifically tailored for each RIM services specialty. Its first release, Visual Corporate Keeper (VCK) records center software, hit the market in 1985. It was followed in short order by Visual Vault Keeper (VVK) for media vaults. The release of Veri-Shred in 2004 represented the first destruction software capable of seamlessly integrating with records center software – critically important to records centers offering shredding services and vice versa.

ASI continues to refine its solutions, releasing VCK-SQL in 2008. Among its many business benefits, VCK-SQL offers records centers:

- **Work order automation** to streamline processes for both operations and billing and to provide a complete audit trail for your customers' vital information.
- **Client-driven applications** to directly manage their carton and file information online. These include VCKweb.NET which is hosted and maintained by the records center and InfoKeeper, which is ASI-managed. Both interface seamlessly with VCK-SQL.

- **Audit controls** to accurately track client information, while incorporating checks & balances to locate items while maintaining a complete scan history. A barcode reader controls the status of all items – not the work order.
- **Powerful route optimization technologies** to identify an optimal route to service multiple addresses, minimizing time and miles driven.
- Easy, cost-effective invoicing with VCK-SQL's **E-billing functionality**, which creates PDF invoices and automatically emails them to your customers, eliminating the need to print and mail invoices.
- An **intuitive billing interface** exports data to popular accounting software applications, utilizing pre-existing accounting/GL codes.

For media vaults, ASI's Visual Vault Keeper delivers secure, accurate management of client data. VVK is a true vault management application, able to work independently from your hardcopy software or in conjunction with VCK-SQL. VVK media vault software provides a wide range of storage management capabilities including:

- **Scan verification** to ensure accurate movement of tapes between customer and offsite location, eliminating the possibility of human error.
- **Use of existing volume serial number barcode labels** to verify the transfer of tapes from customer site to the off-site facility. This is extremely valuable as it provides an accurate rotation history for every tape.
- **No application of records center barcodes is required** which improves the number of tapes/units processed in an hour. This also lessens the possibility of errors and maintains an audit trail from the client site to the offsite facility.
- **Integrated barcode scanner technology** to audit customer tapes quickly and accurately.
- **Accommodation of non-TMS tapes** via its own auto-slotting capabilities, assuring maximum utilization of available space in the vault.
- **VVKweb.NET Client interface** enabling clients to manage their inventory online.
- **Ability to interpret a variety of barcode symbologies**, including tri-optic labels.

One of the latest additions to ASI's suite of software solutions is Veri-Shred. As the destruction industry grew and operators expanded their RIM service offerings to include both shredding services and records storage, Andrews Software saw a

need for purpose-built destruction software capable of integrating seamlessly with records center software. Veri-Shred is ASI's solution, conceived and developed as a true destruction software solution targeting the specific requirements faced by shredding companies today. Veri-Shred works equally well for plant-based and mobile destruction operations. Perhaps most importantly, Veri-Shred integrates seamlessly with ASI's records center management software – invaluable for an operation with plans to include both lines of service into its business model. Veri-Shred's business benefits include:

- **Advanced mobile functionality** streamlines business processes to maximize service and ensure accountability. Service orders preloaded into the mobile scanning device provide critical client information and proof-of-service at client site by capturing driver activities while on the road. Signature capture and onsite printing of destruction certificates, a NAID certification requirement, via Bluetooth communication rounds out this easy to use, yet powerful customer service tool.
- An **intuitive calendar** can be filtered by route, customer, or service address. Meters are displayed for each day, which fill and change color as route thresholds are approached, thus providing the tools to quickly make adjustments by truck and/or route. The calendar also displays the total bin count and breaks it out by bin type.
- **Flexible scheduling** accommodates any service schedule. Apply schedules to an address or individual bins within the address. Pre-scheduling of one-time pickups and cleanouts is also possible.
- **Route optimization integration** with UPS Logistics Technologies Roadnet Anywhere helps reduce route mileage and overtime.
- **Certificates of Destruction** can be "auto-emailed" to the client and include all pertinent information related to the bins serviced. **Environmental reports** are also available to clients and accommodate different currencies.

ASI's mobile scanning is the icing on the software cake because not only does ASI Mobile contain the driver scanning application, it also houses Veri-Shred and VCK-SQL scanning applications. Whether your driver is servicing a destruction bin, delivering a carton or file, or working in the warehouse, ASI Mobile provides one solution to successfully tackle all of your business requirements.

For more information on selecting software to help grow your business with minimal business disruption, you're invited to visit the ASI Team at booth #100, 102, 104 during the PRISM Annual Conference. You can also visit www.AndrewsSoftware.com for more information.