

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white sleeveless top, is smiling and looking down at a document she is holding. She is in a modern office with brick walls and large windows. In the background, other office workers are visible, including a man with a beard looking at a laptop. The scene is brightly lit with natural light from the windows.

# A Blueprint for HR Document Transformation:

## 4 Steps to Ensure Secure Access, Protection, Distribution, and Destruction

**Access**  
Information Protected.

# First, the Good News:

HR departments' responsibility is shifting to become a strategic, culture-developing backbone through rigorous recruitment and employee retention efforts.

# The Problem?

Your department is still bogged down with routine administrative tasks that distract from your organization's objectives. Increasing regulatory and legal requirements make the balance even tougher, with additional required documentation and rules that dictate how long documents need to be retained. The consequences of non-compliance range from steep fines and legal costs to reputational damage that risks the very strategic objectives HR organizations are trying to achieve. Only 6% of HR teams surveyed said they were "very confident" that their employee files were complete;<sup>1</sup> how can your HR team join this confident group?

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Today's HR departments must take a comprehensive approach to automating document management, so they can focus on contributing new insights and value to their organization. Here, we present four steps toward achieving this goal, as well as action items your company can take to implement an end-to-end document management solution.

<sup>1</sup> Access Corp., *Three Keys to Easier HR Employee Document Audits*

# Step One

## Discover Areas for Improvement

It stands to reason that finding a technology solution for the most document-intensive tasks, like onboarding, will provide time back to your team. A modern HR document management solution should provide an end-to-end approach for all your document-related needs — receiving, scanning, storing, searching, and safely destroying physical and digital documents — through a full suite of technology and services. Begin your search by assessing your current document management processes and needs to create a gap analysis; then, use it as a roadmap for implementation.

## ACTION ITEMS

- **Assess the current situation.** How are your HR documents utilized? How and where do they originate? For example, some may be on paper, while others are generated by forms in HR, payroll, or other systems that may or may not share data. Who needs access to these documents? How is sensitive data protected from unauthorized access?
- **Review processes.** What is your current HR document flow? Consider the entire life cycle, from origination, to storage, secure access, and destruction. How do you know if employee files are complete and up to date? What gaps or weaknesses exist in your current process?
- **Determine current and future needs.** Are your ongoing processes as efficient as possible? How, for example, can you better respond to unemployment claims, audits, and legal cases? If your current processes aren't meeting your needs, what changes do you need to implement to achieve best practices and protect your organization?

# Step Two

## Integrate and Aggregate

Your HR document management solution doesn't exist in a vacuum. Your organization likely already has technology, such as an HCM or HRIS, that generates information and documents and utilizes the information stored in them. Two important criteria for any solution is how tightly it integrates with your technology and internal processes, and how easy it is to locate and securely access documents as necessary.

## ACTION ITEMS

- **Establish initial engagement priorities.** You should choose a solution provider well versed in best practices around data migration. Your provider should help you determine which paper documents should be digitized and which can simply be indexed and stored in paper form. What about digital documents that are scattered across services such as SharePoint and Dropbox, or sitting on a local drive or mobile device? Your provider should have established processes for addressing every such contingency.
- **Establish ongoing control.** A best-in-class solution will empower your HR team to customize and maintain the system to its own requirements with minimal IT intervention. Does the solution you're considering adapt to your organization's business practices or vice versa? How easy is it to make changes, establish permissions, or add document types?
- **Create a central repository.** The goal of integration and aggregation is to ensure that records are complete, accessible, protected, and not duplicated. To provide a "single source of truth," your organization needs a central aggregation point between disparate HR systems, network drives, and paper files. A central repository, accessible from anywhere, will facilitate search, and assure that HR files are secure and retained in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- **Integrate with other systems.** HRIS and HCM systems have transformed HR practices, but they are not well equipped to manage a myriad of document types. Rather, your document management solution should integrate with these systems to share data securely and give you insight into missing documents, compliance deadlines, and retention schedules.

# Step Three

## Protect Your Documents

While your HR documents contain sensitive information that require protection, they must be accessible to those (such as auditors and key employees) who need them. The solution is to provide central control to HR administrators while offering discreet, secure remote access for review, approval, or signature as needed.

## ACTION ITEMS

- **Centralize document control.** Keep sensitive information under HR's control, not IT's. Your solution should let you securely share documents with internal or external stakeholders as needed, while blocking unauthorized access. Authorized users should be able to grant and rescind access individually or by role, whether for the complete files of a single employee or a single document type across multiple employees.
- **Provide a complete audit trail.** To ensure data security, your organization's HR document management system should record every access and every action (e.g., view, share, print, download) taken on a document to create a complete audit trail.
- **Provide secure access.** Best practice dictates that documents never leave the system. Instead, users should be able to share documents by creating secure links, rather than email attachments and virtual "file rooms" accessible by a secure link and protected with multiple-factor authentication for online viewing. Documents can be further secured by controlling what actions (such as view, print, copy, or download) each user role can perform on them. This access should be able to expire after a predetermined timeframe as an additional safeguard.

# Step Four

## Leverage Technology to Ensure Compliance and Governance

One of the greatest challenges that HR organizations face is making sure they comply with government regulations and corporate policies dictating document governance. They not only must assure that each employee's files are complete in the first place, but also that certain documents, such as certifications, remain up to date. Automation can make these processes more transparent and efficient.

### ACTION ITEMS

- **Provide transparency.** Dashboards should let administrators know at a glance which documents are missing or expired. To do this, your solution must be capable of identifying each type of document (I-9, Commission Plan, Benefits Elections, etc.), as well as its appropriate usage and access restrictions.
- **Automate compliance monitoring.** Through automation, you can guarantee that all the right documents exist in each employee's file and ensure all documents are up to date. If a document is near its expiration, then the compliance monitor could alert both the administrator and employee, requesting a new document from the employee without human intervention.
- **Generate e-forms for quick data capture.** E-Forms live within the management system for easy, secure creation, access, and distribution when needed. Routing of e-forms for completion and approval can be automated.

# Conclusion

If your HR organization is wasting time and resources dealing with ever-growing piles of paperwork or disparate digital systems, you need to implement a comprehensive, end-to-end document management solution to tame the chaos. By combining the benefits of secure online accessibility, content-aware technology, and automation, you can ensure that your HR documents are securely accessible from the moment they are created to the end of their lifecycle — and you can free up valuable time to devote to strategic goals that impact the bottom line.

# Learn More

To find out how Access and its CartaHR software can help your business, contact our team today at [1.877.345.3546](tel:18773453546) or [on our website](#).

