

Rinnai scorches document search times

A conversation at the photocopier led the heating supplier to Ricoh Consulting for a new Laserfiche document management solution...

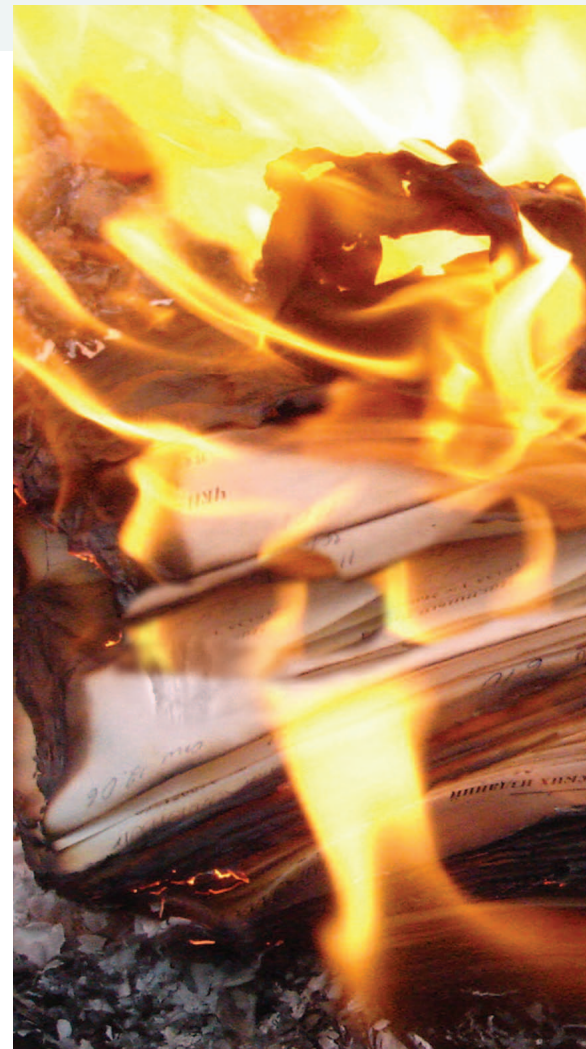
Based in Auckland, Rinnai NZ has been supplying quality home and water heating solutions to the NZ market for over 30 years. The company is a solely owned subsidiary of Rinnai Japan Corporation – the world’s largest gas appliance manufacturer – and an industry leader in efficient heating solutions. Contrary to Rinnai’s reputation for innovation and efficiency in all things heat related, however, in 2011 the company’s document management solution was running lukewarm at best. “We had a very manual system,” Rinnai ICT manager Neil Green explains, “and basically it never worked. Some people would follow protocol and others wouldn’t. You’d end up with files pulled out and sitting on someone’s desk and no one knew where they were because that person hadn’t logged them out. Or people would make their own copies to work with, so version control became an issue.”

Ricoh Consulting’s solution specialist Matthew Harborth says while the situation at Rinnai may have seemed like a mess to Green’s team, it was actually a fairly typical document management scenario. “It was very similar to most companies I’ll visit,” he says. “There’ll be a walk-in-cupboard full of paper files. There’ll be some kind of scanning system. Documents will be stored manually or electronically on a standard issue Windows server. There’s no uniformity and people have created things on the fly. It’s not that anything is actually lost – it’s just that nothing is easy to find.” All that aside, Harborth says in terms of its strategy for document management, Rinnai was actually further along than most. “Their IT department had just completed a project of creating a folder structure for the entire business,” he says. “But they hadn’t deployed it

because it would have only had Windows features – they had the right model but they didn’t have the means to get the most out of it.”

Green’s imagination was then captured when he installed a new Ricoh multi-function device. “It came with a product called Scanner Vision,” he says, “which allows you to scan Excel and Word documents and reproduce them directly. It’s a great tool.” When Harborth told him it could interface directly with the Laserfiche document management solution, Green says his vision began to take shape. Rinnai’s documents, regardless of the type of media they are on, could be captured, distributed and controlled at the click of a mouse via the desktop application. Green says Laserfiche has revolutionised document processing, storage and retrieval at Rinnai. “It’s just fantastic,” he says. “You can search on anything that’s written on a document – it doesn’t matter what it is. A name, a date, a product code or an invoice number – even a hand written signature if it’s legible – basically if it’s on a document that’s scanned, you can find it.”

Green says the preliminary work Rinnai had begun meant Laserfiche became one of the fastest IT implementations he’d ever worked on. “Ricoh Consulting looked at what we’d done,” he says, “and said we were already halfway there. They could set up Laserfiche to be exactly the same as that. So once they got started it only took a few days to have everything set up and ready to run.” Despite the speed, the roll out was still carefully staged. With himself, his CFO and Rinnai’s R&D manager all keen advocates of efficient document management, high-level commitment was easy. Further down the ranks, however, he says staff “buy in” for new IT solutions is always a concern.



“It’s a bit hard to put a dollar value on it, but it’s clearly saving us an enormous amount of time.”

Neil Green, Rinnai ICT manager

“You can spend a heck of a lot of time and money making something happen,” he says, “and then find half your staff don’t want to know about it and think it’s a waste of time.” Not so with Laserfiche, he says, “As soon as people see what it’s doing in other departments they’re going ‘we want this now’ – the reaction has been really positive.”


In terms of ROI, Green says while all the numbers have yet to be crunched, Laserfiche has made an immediate impact. “It’s a bit hard



to put a dollar value on it," he says, "but it's clearly saving us an enormous amount of time. Everything is on the desktop at your fingertips. If I want to see who authorised a purchase order, for example, I can do that in seconds rather than waste 10 minutes looking through boxes of paper trying to find it." Overall productivity is certainly up he says. "Since we put the system in, two people from the admin team have left, but we haven't had to replace them because the remaining people are working much more efficiently and are able to absorb that work as well."

Looking ahead Green says as soon as the initial roll out is completed he's excited about exploring Laserfiche's full potential. "I suspect we're not using this to anywhere near its capability," he says, "but we're growing into it exponentially everyday – asking questions like 'can it do this' and 'can it do that?'" So far the answer has always been 'yes' he says – due to both

the depth of product functionality and the skill of Ricoh specialists like Harborth. "Matthew has been right on the money," he says. "He knows document management inside out and getting an engineering consultant like that is seriously good value."

As he looks to integrate Laserfiche with Rinnai's Promapp process flow application, Green says he's not likely to look beyond Ricoh for a document management partner. "I've never had any issues with Ricoh," he says. "Their model for printers, multi-centres, scanning and everything else is fantastic – and the backup service is really good. No one has managed to get a foot in the door since Ricoh arrived and that's because I don't think anyone else can match the service these guys have given us." 

CASE STUDY//

Rinnai

AT A GLANCE//

INDUSTRY

- Appliance manufacturing & distribution

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

- Standardise document archiving and retrieval.
- Improve employee efficiency.
- Provide auditable document tracking.

SOLUTION

- Laserfiche document management implemented by Ricoh Consulting.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Document retrieval times reduced from hours to seconds.
- Audit trail for document processing.
- Operational costs decreased.
- Staff efficiency increased.
- Search on all content within scanned documents.

FOR MORE INFO//

RICOH CONSULTING SERVICES

AUCKLAND
Irene Drenko
+64 9 368 6044

WELLINGTON
Duncan Ashenhurst
+64 4 381 7605

CHRISTCHURCH
Alex Power
+64 3 374 8397

DUNEDIN
Andrew McPherson
+64 3 471 8735

Visit [iStart](#) online for more Ricoh case studies.