

THE DOCUMENT CONTROL TRIBUNE

Issue no. 14 - September 2017



**WILL A GOOD DC
NECESSARILY BECOME
A GOOD LEAD
OR MANAGER?**



**REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES
WHERE DOCUMENT CONTROL
MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE**



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EDITORIAL

This quarter, with an ever-increasing number of Document Control professionals working on deepening their competencies and on widening the scope of their vision of their work environment, we explore topics that should help develop a more elaborate set of considerations.

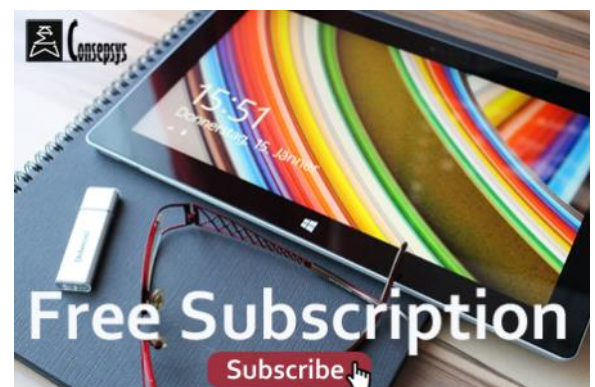
We take different perspectives to look at how Document Control helps, how it should perform and how it should not stay stuck 'in the box'.

We also share the experience of our readers. Spreading best practices allows the profession to improve its image: the more DCs adopt best practices, the better they will be perceived by their interfaces and their stakeholders.

By opening the debate on the place of Document Control in a much wider perspective, we also hope to indirectly help DC professionals take their responsibility to be curious, inquisitive and to continually seek to align their performance with the interests of their respective organisations, industries, and even countries, sometimes.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) remains one of the best ways to keep an attractive professional profile in a world with a decreasing number of job offers.

Isn't what 'being the best' is all about?



UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF 'LOSS OF OPPORTUNITY'

Feature Dossier

Is efficiency a luxury or a necessity?

Many professionals do not appear to realise that a lack of efficiency is costly to their company. Many professionals do not appear to realise that a lack of efficiency may in fact directly threaten their job.

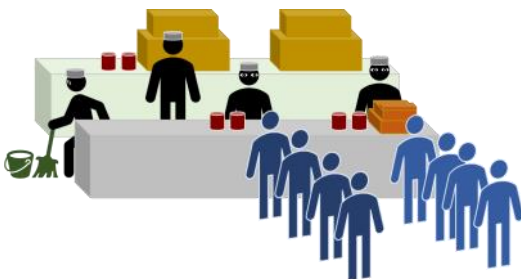
This may appear very vague and abstract, therefore let's take a concrete example to pragmatically illustrate this premise: let's analyse the efficiency of two competing coffee shops.

Coffee shop #1: efficient coffee shop

In our first example, we observe an efficient coffee shop. It has 4 employees: 1 employee at the cashier, 1 employee interfacing with customers, 1 employee preparing orders and 1 employee keeping the shop clean.

We can observe that there are two lines of customers: 1 line with people placing their orders of waiting to place their orders; and 1 line with people who have placed their orders and who are waiting to pay.

The flow of customers appears steady. This is an efficient operation.



Let's imagine that this shop earns \$240 per hour. Therefore:

Number of employees	4
Income of shop per hour	\$240

Coffee shop #2a: struggling coffee shop

In our second example, we observe a struggling coffee shop. It also has 4 employees. However: 1 employee interfaces with customers, prepares orders and holds the cashier; 3 employees focus on cleaning the shop.

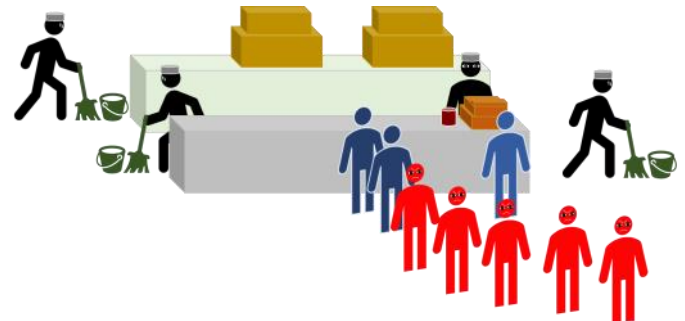
We can see that the flow of customers is bumpy and, in fact, 5 potential customers are leaving (in red) because they are not happy with the speed of the service.

In addition, they can see that there are 4 employees and that the service could be faster if employees were more efficient and if they better managed their priorities.

These leaving customers will probably go to a competing and more efficient coffee shop.

This is a very inefficient operation. As a result, this shop has a lower income – say \$90 per hour. Therefore:

Number of employees	4
Income of shop per hour	\$90



What will eventually happen to this inefficient coffee shop?

It will become an empty coffee, as it is shown in our next example.

Coffee shop #2b: empty coffee shop

In our last situation, we are in an empty coffee shop.

It used to have 4 employees. However, because it was very inefficient, their customers gradually stopped coming because they were not happy with the speed of the service.

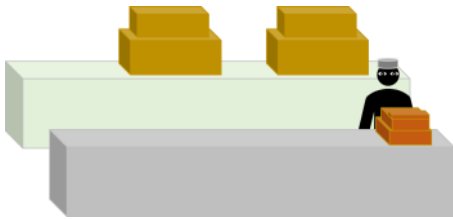
Eventually, the shop did not make enough money to keep all 4 employees. 3 employees were asked to leave and only 1 has stayed.

However, sales kept dropping because the operation was very inefficient with only 1 employee but, also, the shop could not be kept clean for lack of sufficient manpower.



Eventually, the shop had to close to stop making financial losses.

Number of employees	1
Income of shop per hour	\$0



Analysis

In our first two examples, there were 4 employees in each shop. However, one shop was efficient and the other one was not.

The inefficient coffee shop, through its inefficiency and its poorly managed priorities, suffered what is called a 'loss of opportunity': indeed, if it had been more efficient, it could have had the opportunity to make \$240 per hour instead of \$90 per hour.

Because it was inefficient, it lost the opportunity to make \$150 more per hour.

As a result, its sales were lower than the salaries paid to its employees and its overheads and it eventually had to let go of some employees. In the end, it even went bankrupt.

Efficiency in Document Control

Document Control professionals need to realise that, just as in the above coffee shop examples, a lack of efficiency makes their company lose opportunities. These losses all eventually become financial losses and they weaken the company.

Something that is often heard is that 'inefficiency does not cost more to the company because it has the same number of employees. There would be more costs if the company hired more employees'.

This is where good Document Control professionals must keep the example of coffee shop #2 in mind. With the

same number of employees as coffee shop #1, coffee shop # 2 made \$150 less per hour (or 62.5% less).

The resulting 'cost' of an inefficient Document Control is a 'loss of opportunity': the funds that the company invested in this inefficient Document Control have effectively been lost. The company has invested in something that has given disappointing results.

This money is gone for good, whereas it could have produced more results – if Document Control had been more efficient – it or could have been spent in something else that would have made more money for the company.

With an inefficient Document Control, eventually the financial performance of the company drops, or a manager realises that the results obtained from Document Control are disappointing compared to the initial expectations. This manager may decide to let go of one or more Document Controllers.

How to be efficient

We have seen how Document Control inefficiency is costly to a company and how it may directly threaten jobs. We have seen that inefficiency leads to a 'loss of opportunity'.

But how to be efficient?

Below is a summarised set of tips:

- Planning work properly
- Managing priorities well
- Monitoring performance through KPIs
- Making resource requirement calculations
- Continually developing competencies
- Maintaining a 'lessons learnt' register

and so many more.

However, we wish to hear about you.

Write to us on dctribune@consepsys.com and tell us how you ensure that you work efficiently.
Best stories and tips will be published in next issues of the Document Control Tribune.



WILL A GOOD DOCUMENT CONTROLLER NECESSARILY BECOME A GOOD LEAD OR MANAGER?

A natural career progression for senior Document Controllers is to evolve to a team leader position or a Document Control manager position.

Although it seems like an obvious and clear career progression, being a team leader or a manager is very different from being a Document Controller (even a senior one).

Indeed, the tasks are different, for example:

- DC tasks would involve checking documents, registering and uploading documents, distributing them, managing review and approval cycles, etc.
- While the team leader or manager tasks would involve for example setting objectives for both the team and individuals within the team, monitoring performance, reporting progress, calculating workload, organising resources and tasks, communicating about the DC group capabilities, influencing, convincing and gathering supports from stakeholders etc).

The tasks are indeed very different, and so are the skillset required to be a team leader or a manager.

It does not mean that a good DC cannot become a good team leader or manager, but it is a career move that has to be accompanied in order to get the mindset, skills and tools required to succeed.

This career move also definitely requires a change of mindset and priorities: indeed, becoming a DC team lead sometimes (often, actually) means that you will not perform daily document control tasks anymore, but that you will focus on the management aspects. To be a success the new team leader or manager must acknowledge and embrace the profound change of focus in his/her role.

One of the challenges for example is to make time for this new role. Far too often, the lead role is added onto someone's current role. So instead of having to perform only DC tasks, you now have to perform both DC and Lead DC tasks for example. This is in most cases setting the new leader up for failure. As a team leader, you need to focus on the processes, the flows, the stakeholders, the bigger picture and its translation into your team's tasks. You also need to be present for your team in order to support the team. This is not something that you can satisfactorily do if you are tied up with hands-on daily tasks.

Becoming a good manager or team leader also requires soft skills to lead people and achieve results. Soft skills, attitude and personality are key to the success of this career path. For example, respect and credibility (both from your team and from your own manager) is something that you need to earn, it does not happen overnight, or with a new job title. It is obviously easier to slip into a new role when those soft skills have been developed along the

years, even when not yet in the position of a leader.

In conclusion, becoming a team leader or a manager is a career choice that involves a profound change of scope and activities and that can be prepared and accompanied, in order to ensure success.

The following training courses are designed to accompany Document Controllers moving up to a Lead or Manager position:

- The "Certified Lead Document Controller Training Course" aims at preparing Document Control professionals to manage and lead teams of Document Controllers, to manage and organise DC activities and tasks, to manage stakeholders, to communicate DC requirements and processes, and to run, implement or improve Document Control management systems (procedures, tools, software, etc).
- The "Transitioning to a Manager Position Training Course" can prove extremely valuable to progress one's career: indeed, moving up to a Manager position requires a profound change of mindset and perspective. Participants are guided to learn to slip into their new role as a Leader, with a better understanding of team leading, business administration, commercial and strategic concepts.



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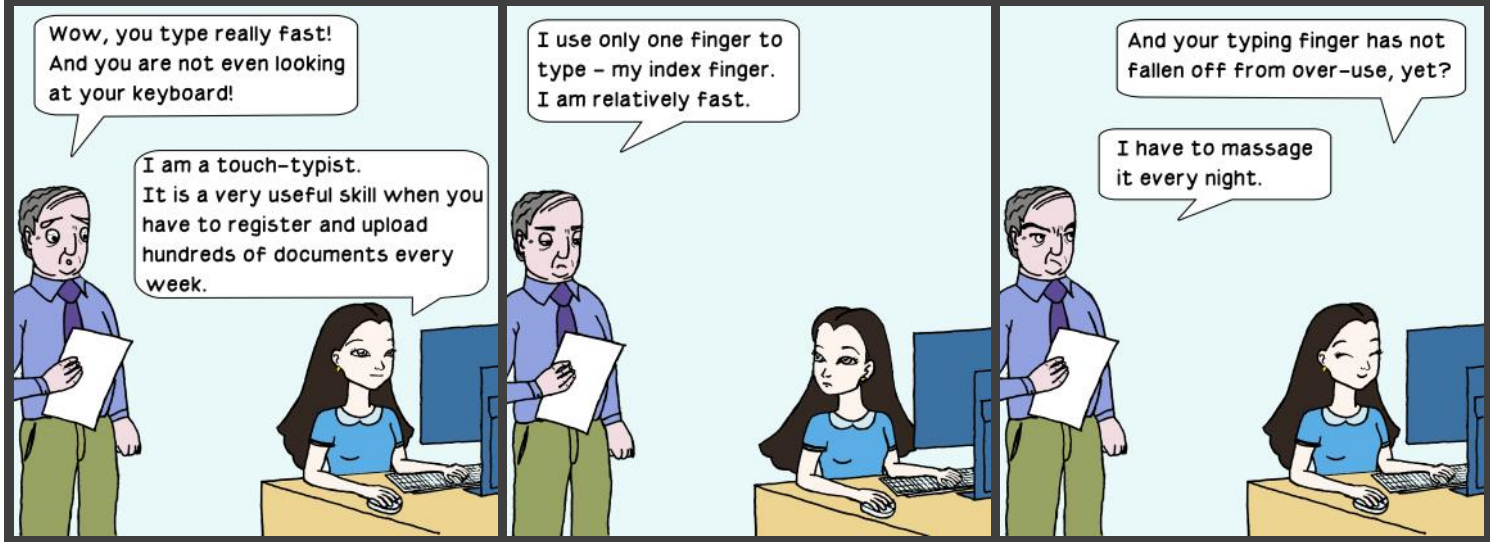
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REAL LIFE EXAMPLES WHERE DOCUMENT CONTROL MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

As a Document Control professional, it is important to know a few high-profile stories involving Document Control, in order to communicate about the importance of the profession.

In this article, discover how Document Control can help in times of severe crisis.

United Airlines flight UA 232

United Airlines flight UA 232 left Denver, USA, on the 19th of July 1989. It was bound for Chicago.

The aircraft had three engines – 1 on each wing and 1 on its tail. It was an old-fashioned aircraft, with hydraulic controls (instead of electric controls on modern aircrafts). In those days, each flight had in its cockpit a pilot, a co-pilot and a mechanic.

About an hour after take-off, an element of the tail engine broke and severely damaged the engine and all the hydraulic systems of the plane.

To make a comparison, the plane was like a car on a fast road with no steering wheel and no brakes: it was impossible to direct the plane and it was impossible to land normally.

296 people were on board, including the crew. This was a nightmare scenario.

For Document Controllers, the interesting part is that the pilot, the co-pilot and the mechanic worked closely with people on the ground to explore ways to keep control of the aircraft despite this catastrophic failure. They went through the airplane construction documentation together to understand what had happened and what could be done to mitigate this horrible situation.

Eventually, given all the information that they had discussed, the crew coordinated with a nearby airport, in Sioux City, to prepare for an emergency landing, using only engine thrust to control the plane's altitude.

Skipping the story over the harrowing details of the emergency landing, the pilot crash-landed as well as he could, but at the last moment, the plane rolled to one side, a wing hit the ground and ignited. The airplane slid on the ground and finished its course upside down, in flames.

Of the 296 people on board, 111 died during the crash-landing.

However, thanks to the pilot's calm and focused attitude, thanks to communication and coordination with ground personnel but also, thanks to the available, up-to-date and comprehensive aircraft construction documentation, 185 people survived the crash itself.

Without the above elements, it is clear that the death toll could have been much worse.

Documentation and, indirectly Document Control, were essential in understanding the reasons behind the loss of control of the aircraft and in deciding on the best course of action to mitigate this disastrous situation.

Apollo 13 mission to the Moon

On the 11th of April 1970, mission Apollo 13 was launched from the USA and was headed to the Moon, with 3 astronauts on board.

About 2.5 days into the mission and on their way to the Moon, the crew heard a loud bang. An oxygen tank of the space craft had exploded, causing damage to various systems and threatening the lives of the crew.

Landing on the Moon had become impossible and the crew was in a critical situation.

From a voyage to the Moon, the objective of the mission turned to the survival of the crew.

On board, damage consisted in loss of power, of heat, of partial reserves of drinking water, in weakened communication with Earth and in damage to the

carbon dioxide removal system.

This was a nightmare scenario, at a distance of over 330,000 km from Earth.

For Document Controllers, the interesting part is that the space craft crew worked very closely with people on Earth to explore ways to make repairs to the spacecraft and to safely return despite this catastrophic failure. Engineers on Earth went through the spacecraft's construction documentation and developed makeshift repair solutions based only on the materials that were available to the crew.

Using the solutions that engineers on Earth had developed based on space craft documentation, the crew succeeded in implementing the repairs and, in close cooperation with Earth, they operated the space craft to use the Moon's gravity to make a loop around it and to set their course back to Earth.

Skipping the story over the ingenious and courageous actions taken by both the crew and people on Earth, the three astronauts eventually safely landed back on Earth almost 6 days after they took off.

Thanks to the Earth team's quick and ingenious response and solutions, thanks to the crew's calm and focused attitude, thanks to communication and coordination with Earth personnel but also, thanks to the available, up-to-date and comprehensive space craft construction documentation, the 3 astronauts survived.

Without the above elements, it is clear that they would not have made it back to Earth.

Documentation and, indirectly Document Control, were essential in understanding the nature and the extent of the damage sustained by the space craft, in developing ingenious repair solutions and in saving the lives of the crew.



Training Course:

Transitioning to a Manager Position (2 days)

Course Summary

Moving up to a Manager position requires a profound change of mindset and perspective.

This course introduces new and future managers to the new environment that awaits them: team leading, business administration, commercial and strategic concepts.

The mindset and focus of participants is shifted from detail to overview – a change that they must go through to be successful Managers.

Audience

Individuals moving up to a Manager position.

Team leaders, managers.

Individuals seeking to progress their career.

[Find out more](#)



PORTRAIT OF A DOCUMENT CONTROLLER



DIANA COLE-WILLIAMS

Document Management in the Rail Infrastructure industry, London, United Kingdom

Diana attended the Advanced Document Control Course with ConsepSys in Amsterdam in June 2017

Can you tell us a bit about you?

My name is Diana Cole-Williams, I am 24 years old and a newlywed to my amazing husband who works in the Construction industry. I was born in Brazil to a Bolivian mother, Nigerian father but raised in London, UK.

What is your current role?

I am currently part of the Document Management Team for one of the biggest rail infrastructure projects in Europe. Upon joining the business last year, I took a large active role in ensuring the documents and data needed were ready for contracts to gain the required legislative approval to carry out and progress with works.

I am now helping with the mobilisation of major contracts for the business, from pre-construction information packs, EDMS administration and day to day document tasks, to one to one interviews with senior management for annual data surveys - my boss makes sure no one day is the same and always signs me up for a new challenge!

Can you describe your professional experience?

I've worked in Document Control for 7 years. My job title has varied throughout my career from Senior Document Controller, SharePoint Project Manager to Document Controller. I've always been in Document Management,

there's no other profession that has interested me more. I like the neatness and procedural approach, knowing that what was once a mess I've turned into a squeaky clean package or collection of documents.

Throughout the past 7 years I have been fortunate to work in the Oil & Gas, Construction and Infrastructure industries allowing me to develop a broad knowledge of policies and procedures. These skills have equipped me to successfully implement and roll out SharePoint to be used as a document management system for a company area division and help streamline document management processes to

"After the course, areas that once were not my strengths are now aspects of my work tool kit I can depend on"

ensure that all parties work in harmony with the same requirements.

Soon I'll be embarking on becoming a certified internal auditor to support my document management knowledge and skills.

Which ConsepSys course did you attend and when?

I attended the Advanced Document Control course in June 2017 in Am-

sterdam.

What did you think about the course? How did it help you in your current role and career development?

I think this course is not only effective for the work challenges we encounter every so often but also leaves you going back to work with the confidence in knowing and demonstrating how you can enhance an already running document control process.

I can say that the Advanced Document Course better equipped me for the challenging parts of being a Document Controller, from presenting to large groups, Excel formulas and people

skills. Within 2.5 days I learned a lot of things that I probably would not have known should I have not attended. Areas that once were not my strengths are now aspects of my work tool kit I can depend on.

If you attended one of our courses and would like to apply to be featured in one of our upcoming issues, drop us an email at:
dctribune@consepSys.com

OUR READERS SHARE THEIR TIPS TO BE METICULOUS AND METHODICAL

In the article “The meticulous and methodical Document Controller” (issue #13) we asked our readers to share their own tips and experience.

In this issue, let’s hear from Rachel Silas, Lead Document Controller working for Bouygues Construction Nigeria Ltd:

Note-taking

Rachel: Before the end of each day, I take short notes on my outstanding tasks to avoid forgetting anything the next day.

Consepsys comment:

Taking notes allows not to let anything fall through the cracks. It allows to organize one’s thoughts and, importantly, it allows to plan work and prioritise tasks. It is a trait of organised professionals.

Self-check and proof-reading

Rachel: I proof-read my emails and logs to avoid overconfidence before sending

them.

Consepsys comment: Self-checking and proof-reading one’s own work helps protect one’s professional reputation – emails or documents that are full of spelling mistakes can push the reader to question your competence.

It also reveals a quality mindset – which is a core competency for Document Controllers.

Undelayed and timely action

Rachel: I update my registers immediately when there are new updates to avoid piling work and to make sure everything on the server is up-to-date. This increases confidence of the users on all information found on the server;

Consepsys comment: One of the core missions of Document Control is to ensure that users trust the information that they find on the system (see the Consepsys definition of Document Control in our blog article “[What is Document](#)

[Control](#)”). Updating the system with no delay strongly maintains this trust. It can even prevent accidents. Avoiding to let work pile up on your desk is also an excellent practice. If tasks are left unattended and if they are allowed to form a significant backlog, it can cause a loss of motivation. It can also damage your reputation – your interfaces and stakeholders may be waiting for the result of your work and their opinion of you depends on how reliable you are.

Use of electronic reminders

Rachel: I keep an outlook reminder of expiry dates of relevant files to ensure prompt renewals.

Consepsys comment: Some people have an excellent memory, but meticulous professionals use reminders on their electronic calendars. Using this method, no task can ever be forgotten. In addition, it helps ensure that actions are not delayed.

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