

Digital Forms for Municipal Field Workers

iFORMATION – Municipal Works

A Field Data Capture & Information Transfer Solution For Municipal Field Workers

Data Capture with Speed, Accuracy and Quality for Field Employees

iFORMATION – Municipal Works, is the InfoMax digital pen and form data capture solution, that provides municipal field workers with the ability to complete forms in the field environment while enabling the subsequent upload of the data to back-end municipal systems. iFORMATION – Municipal Works, incorporates digital pen and paper technology, and is designed specifically for data collection and processing from handwriting on custom designed digital paper municipal forms. The solution integrates best-of-breed handwriting recognition software to convert handwritten information into a digital format. The form data can then be transferred to the iFORMATION system for review and corrections before sending the data for final verification and transfer to back-end municipal systems.

Designed and Adapted to Field Work

One of the main objectives of the iFORMATION – Municipal Works digital form solution, is to provide municipal outside employees with a process that is adapted to field work. A paper and pen solution is the easiest to use in the field, and it requires very little user training. Some field staff prefer to fill out their digital forms during the site visit, and yet others prefer to fill out the forms in their vehicles following a visit to a site or at the end of a day. iFORMATION – Municipal Works brings this flexibility in terms of forms data entry, enabling field staff to work as usual in the field while boosting efficiency.



Integrated Business Rules to Increase the Quality of Data

iFORMATION – Municipal Works easily integrates customized business rules designed to increase the quality of the data. When field staff transfer the forms data to the system the server checks the data and flags any possible errors or missing information. This way, the field staff are able to correct the errors by themselves before transferring the data to the company's back-end system. With the integrated business rules, the system acts as a guide which means the data is already validated by the expert before it is sent for upload to municipal systems.

Increasing Service Quality without Increasing Costs

Municipalities continue to increase their requirements with regard to respect to time lines and processes in completion of various forms. The iFORMATION – Municipal Works digital forms solution enables field staff to further increase efficiency and meet ever more strict time lines and efficiency requirements without increasing costs related to these procedures.





Before implementing the iFORMATION – Municipal Works pen and paper solution, outside workers generally had to drop off their handwritten forms at their offices to be entered into asset systems by administrative personnel. This meant having all of the data typed into the system, having it verified by the field management, then corrected for errors, then re-read, before the data could be sent to a business system for processing and report generation. All of the tedious time spent typing handwritten notes, in addition to the numerous back-and-forth exchanges, is no longer necessary. This translates to a huge savings in staffing costs, as the number of data-entry administrative staff required will be reduced.

Solution Uptake Increases Over Time

Not all of the forms or asset inspections can be handled by the system due to their specificity and complexity, but generally 95% of the most frequently used forms or inspection reports can be filled out with the iFORMATION – Municipal Works digital pen solution. Over time as forms are modified based on client feedback, the percentage of situations handled by the iFORMATION – Municipal Works Forms solution will increase.

A Modular Customizable Architecture

iFORMATION – Municipal Works provides a modular work flow with predefined scenarios and connectors to back-end systems. With the handwriting recognition software associated to municipal works dictionaries, the rate of errors is dramatically reduced and custom terms and verbiage are easily added to the dictionaries.

Business Needs:

- Improve service time-lines and quality of data delivered to back-end systems
- Increase efficiency of field and office staff
- Handle a growing number of forms
- Increase productivity of field staff and enable completion of forms in a familiar manner
- Reduce costs to maintain tight budgets
- Get a solution in place and running quickly and easily

Problems:

- Double data entry of forms by field and administrative staff is too costly
- Laptops and PDAs too cumbersome for use in the field
- Field workers require a solution that will not slow their completion of forms in the field

The iFORMATION – Municipal Works Solution:

- Field workers send data by several options including the InfoMax PenStation or wireless via a Blackberry.
- Costs are reduced through automated data transfer to asset management systems such as Hansen and Maximo
- Error alerts are handled in an automated manner enabling staff to make corrections themselves
- iFORMATION – Municipal been designed to decrease forms completion times and reduce costs. Additional benefits include improved data accuracy, staff satisfaction, and overall easy adoption of the solution.

The Digital Pen vs the Laptop or Tablet:

- Implementing and maintaining a digital pen software solution is much faster and lower cost than laptop or tablet applications.
- Digital pen applications require minimal staff training and support from IT technical staff.
- Digital paper form layout and interface to applications can be modified at very low cost compared with PC or tablet applications.
- Digital pens are well suited for use by field workers and lower cost to support and maintain than laptops or tablets.