

A photograph of a large, multi-story stone building with several windows and a prominent tower. The building is partially covered in green ivy. In the foreground, there are green trees and a utility pole with flags. The sky is blue with light clouds.

eSCRIBE Halves Meeting Preparation Time and Effort for County of Wellington

Customer
County of Wellington

Location
Wellington, ON

Industry
Municipality

About the Client

Located in Southwest Ontario just over 100 kilometers west of Toronto, the County of Wellington is the upper-tier municipality to seven member municipalities including the Town of Erin and Town of Minto – both of which are now also eSCRIBE customers – plus the Townships of Wellington North, Mapleton, Centre Wellington, Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch.

The County is home to a growing population counted at nearly 91,000 in 2016 and now estimated at over 95,000, with key industries including manufacturing, agriculture, health care and the creative economy. The County has an active Committee system with eight standing committees and County Council.

The Challenge

The County set out to find a software solution that would simplify its processes for creating agendas and minutes while cutting down preparation time. “In our previous workflow, staff reports would be sent to our clerks by email,” said Kim Courts, Deputy Clerk for the County of Wellington. “We would save the reports into specific folders, compile them together in Adobe Acrobat and then manually add page numbers and bookmarks.”



With roughly 90 meetings each year and agenda sizes ranging from five to 800 pages, that existing process was extremely time-consuming. “It took many days each month to prepare the agendas, and any last-minute changes were difficult and cumbersome. Not only would we need to incorporate the updated material, but we also had to manually re-type report recommendations, and adjust the page numbers and bookmarks.”

In addition to their efficiency goals, the County wanted a system that would be easy for staff to use and would also make it simpler to store and subsequently locate their reports.

The Solution

County Clerk Donna Bryce learned of eSCRIBE meeting management through word of mouth, and after getting a demonstration of the software and talking to eSCRIBE executives, the County did not need to look any further.

“It was immediately evident that eSCRIBE would make our process so much easier while putting everything in one spot,” said Courts. “Another attractive feature was that a recommendation in a report could be automatically copied to the minutes template. When we had to retype such recommendations, mistakes could happen. With eSCRIBE, everything pre-populates in the minutes, reducing both effort and errors.”



Kim Courts, Deputy Clerk

A Smooth Move to The Cloud

Having initially deployed the eSCRIBE system as an on-premises solution, the County of Wellington recently transitioned their installation to eSCRIBE's latest online offering running on the Microsoft Azure cloud platform. The migration process went flawlessly, and was completed in just four days.

“Our IT department said that the migration to the cloud was very smooth,” said Courts. “The move to the cloud made upgrades and support easier, while reducing the infrastructure maintenance effort of IT resources.”



The Results

Adopting the eSCRIBE software has tangibly delivered the time and effort savings that the County had hoped to achieve.

“eSCRIBE has definitely made our agenda process easier,” said Courts. “Our turnaround time significantly improved.”

Those time savings are particularly evident while preparing for the busy second week of each month, when Courts creates agendas for numerous meetings. She starts by sending a Monday morning request for all contributors to submit their reports by Wednesday, and begins preparing them and getting approvals from the Clerk and CAO as they come in. “Even setting the deadline for Wednesday at noon and not always receiving everything on time, with eSCRIBE I can still get seven or eight agendas out by that Friday,” she explained.

Late changes to the reports and agendas are similarly simplified. “If our CAO wants something changed or the contributor has their own update, I just work with the contributor, re-upload the report to eSCRIBE, and it’s done in five minutes. The page numbering and bookmarks are also automatically updated.

eSCRIBE’s workflow management tools have also made it easier for Courts to oversee the multi-contributor processes. “I can see what stage everything is at, and where a report may be sitting,” she said. “It helps me easily build rapport with the contributors to help them get their submissions in.”

More Benefits Ahead

Courts notes that as much as eSCRIBE has already benefited Wellington County, the software still has further capabilities she has not yet tapped. “I feel proud that I understand the eSCRIBE solution, and I’m comfortable in helping contributors work through the process too,” she said. “But I know there are still many aspects and features of eSCRIBE that I do not use yet, and I am looking forward to learning more about them as my time permits.”

Courts also highlights the helpfulness of eSCRIBE’s support team. “When an issue has arisen, eSCRIBE has been very timely with their support, and their follow-up is great,” she explained. “While we had a variety of challenges along the way, eSCRIBE’s staff has always been very responsive in addressing them.”

That support combines with the proven results to validate Wellington County’s choice of solution. “We’re glad we made the decision to go with eSCRIBE,” Courts summarized. “I can’t imagine how we ever got by without it before.”

