# Parasol takes flight with ABBYY® data capture solution

## Customer Overview

**Name**

PARASOL

**Location**

Australia

**Industry**

Healthcare

**Challenge**

Automate manual processing of ever-growing mass of enrolment materials, reduce costs and paper waste

**Results**

Over 10,000 hours saved per worker annually in manual data-entry time, achieved cost savings and improved efficiency.

An ABBYY FlexiCapture data capture solution is delivering significant savings in staff time for Registered Training Organization PARASOL, a provider of First Aid and Occupational Health and Safety training through a network of 300 third-party co-providers across Australia.

## Challenge

PARASOL has four offices across Australia and employs more than 300 contractors at any one time providing first aid courses, WHS, fire, safety training and equipment. The organization has worked with Konica Minolta to streamline its business processes for more than a decade. Until recently, PARASOL was processing at least 70,000 enrolments for training courses from 55,000 students each year (with some students enrolling for multiple courses). Staff entered students' details manually into a central database. Sixty thousand registrations were entered annually for first aid courses, and, at four pages per enrolment form, represented 240,000 pages of data.

This year, due to changing government regulations, PARASOL had to increase the number of questions on the enrolment forms and the growing amount of paperwork posed a problem for efficiency. The manual transcription of all the data also often produced errors in the database. Finally, the business also faced pressure to reduce costs, improve productivity, use less paper and protect the environment.

## Automation drive

CEO of PARASOL, Peter McKie, wanted to increase automation in the business and tackle the problem head-on but was unsure which systems to put into place. Konica Minolta's solution was for PARASOL to extract details from student forms using its high end, double-sided, multi-feed scanning MFDs (C654 and C754s) — and capture the data using ABBYY FlexiCapture.

FlexiCapture allows remote users to upload images to the main server using web based front end application and almost immediately receive back the data, OCRed from the hand-filled fields and images. In this way it provides a single entry point, transforming streams of different forms into business-ready data

Peter McKie was keen to rigorously test the solution before finally transforming the whole business to smooth out any glitches. Konica Minolta first installed this software at PARASOL's headquarters in Canberra and then distributed Web Capture Stations among some

of PARASOL's third party training organizations so that the onus for entering and checking the data was transferred from PARASOL's staff onto their partner trainers delivering each course.

In a first stage of transformation, the software turned each form into a CSV file which could then be stored, interpreted and managed by PARASOL's central database. Once this process was working smoothly, Konica Minolta and PARASOL began stage two, working with ABBYY FlexiCapture to upload the scanned data straight into its Cloud-based database, the Learning Management System. This stage is almost complete.

The Konica Minolta and FlexiCapture team redesigned the essential student enrolment form to facilitate a more accurate capture of handwritten information and further streamline PARASOL's operation.

James Coate, Customer Service Administrator at PARASOL, said, "The team tested 10 batches of forms after the redesign- probably a lot more. There were possibly 100 total reiterations of the form before it was perfected. The original form was missing certain fields and was grey scale with black writing. We changed that to white with black writing and the result is a lot clearer."

An initial group of approximately 60 course trainers are now using the new data capture solution, sending the relevant captured data back to the PARASOL database in a timely manner. They simply log on to the PARASOL website to create new forms as necessary. Konica Minolta has also provided PARASOL's partner providers with their own MFPs capable of processing a high volume of data.

The process began in February 2014 and PARASOL was introduced to FlexiCapture in March. Together the team had the software and the central server up and running at the main office in Canberra within a month. Konica Minolta supplied one day's training on the ABBYY FlexiCapture solution to a first group of PARASOL's trainers and, in April, they began to roll out the solution from Canberra to Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. By May, Konica Minolta's job was done.

## Results

The success of this process is that it has significantly reduced the amount of administrative work for PARASOL, saving staff the time spent entering the data (which varied from person to person but could take up to 2 hours for 20 lines) and also the time spent checking the handwritten information (which is now automatically read and interpreted, reducing errors), massively improving their efficiency.

James Coate, Customer Service Administrator at PARASOL, comments, "So far, I would estimate we have saved each member of staff at least half an hour of admin per course which represents at least 10,000 hours in the first year. We are now productively spending that time on accounts, on IT and other important administration as well as, crucially, on pulling in more business. We are becoming more rounded employees and better using our different skills. Changing our focus to growing the company, rather than just trying to stay afloat, is the biggest benefit."

Finally, the data that is entered into PARASOL's Learning Management System is more accurate as a result of the automatic data capture, the newly designed form and the verification at the point of entry. Peter McKie concludes: "This has been a great investment. We have seen an increase in accuracy and a decrease in the amount of physical work and paperwork that the guys are doing and that will only improve over time."

Yury Koryukin, Managing Director of ABBYY Australia, said, "ABBYY Australia is very proud of the vast business process and financial benefits provided to PARASOL with the implementation of our flagship Data Capture platform."

"Konica Minolta is an ABBYY global partner across many of our technologies and the respective company teams in Australia have been working very closely for a number of years with numerous highly successful projects," he said.

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