

From a Field of Six Competitive Solutions, Chelan Chooses Contracts 365® for Its Contract Management Solution

Chelan County PUD Condenses Certain Contract Processes by More Than 50%

INDUSTRY

Electric, Water, Wastewater
Public Utilities, Parks
and Wildlife, and
Telecommunications Services

OBJECTIVE

To transition to a cloud-based contract management solution that meets Chelan's specific compliance needs while automating their manual processes and reducing the IT burden

RESULTS

- Improved contract accuracy to 95% at the point of creation
- Increased transparency into the contract process and reduced the drain on the team's bandwidth
- Accelerated some contract cycles by a minimum of 50% going from weeks to days

Customer Profile

The Chelan County Public Utility District was formed in 1936 by local voters who wanted affordable power for residents. Over time, it expanded to provide water, wastewater public utility, parks and wildlife, and telecommunications services, and currently operates the nation's second-largest, nonfederal, publicly owned hydroelectric generating system. Its strategic plan and vision include providing "the best value for the most people for the longest time."

Business Challenge

Like many growing organizations, Chelan Public Utility District was using a custom-built solution to support partially manual, unique contract processes. For years, the IT department maintained the system directly and made updates that ultimately left the code base difficult to support. Other challenges included:

- An increasing number of contract requests from across the organization introduced a growing, error-prone burden on the contracting team.
- The workflow and approval processes were time-consuming and subject to delays. Many requests needed anywhere from three to five separate approvals in addition to multiple signatures.
- The organization needed greater transparency. Managing the complex workflow and updating stakeholders on the status of requests was a significant bandwidth drain on the team.

A replacement was necessary.

Solution

Mark Belton, Chelan County PUD's Purchasing & Contract Administration Supervisor, researched number solutions, narrowing to a field of six competitive offerings. Unfortunately, few options specifically met his requirements, nor did they offer the flexibility necessary to support his business processes. A neighboring utility company, Grant PUD, suggested a Microsoft based contract management software, Contracts 365. With similar contract management requirements unique to public utilities, Grant PUD had significant success with this solution. A deep dive assessment confirmed that Contracts 365's feature set not only matched Chelan's current needs, but provided the functionality necessary for future requirements as well.

Results

After using Contracts 365 for a mere few months, Chelan experienced numerous positive results. The solution's cloud architecture and integration with Microsoft 365 allowed for ready installation internally with minimal initial and ongoing support from Chelan's IT Department. It also integrated easily into other products including a popular electronic signature solution – removing the need for manual signatures.

By leveraging templates to create contracts which only use approved language that conforms to specific business rules, Chelan saves time, reduces manual errors and minimizes risk. The workflow and approval processes are also greatly expedited as Mark and his team can readily act upon requests, identify older or higher priority tasks, and view open items by status, department and stage.

"The Contracts 365 team not only accommodated our specific needs; they were committed to our success from day one. The Contracts 365 solution provides all of our stakeholders with the immediate transparency they need; it has freed up the contracts team to focus on processing more requests and priority tasks. In some cases, what used to take us weeks to handle now requires a few days."

Mark Belton
Purchasing & Contract Administration Supervisor
Chelan County Public Utility District

Contracts 365 also provided much-needed transparency and self-service throughout the organization. Business requestors can now see the status and workflow stage of their requests as well as any requirements for additional information.

Mark estimates that 95% of Chelan's contracts are now created with greater accuracy, and that the contract cycle for certain use cases has been accelerated by at least 50%. With these new efficiencies introduced, the Contracts Team now has the time and bandwidth to focus on higher priority, higher value activities.

An Award-Winning Future

In November of 2019, World Contracting and Commerce (World CC), an international organization dedicated to promoting the continuous development of global contracting and commercial standards, awarded Chelan with the Innovation and Excellence Award for Strategy Direction for its implementation of Contracts 365.

With this successful implementation, Mark's next steps will be to focus on taking advantage of Contracts 365's advanced metrics and reporting capabilities so that he can readily identify turn ratios and hidden bottlenecks. This innovative solution will continuously help his team to expand their services to support Chelan's strategic plans.

contracts³⁶⁵

+1 781 229-9933
24R Pleasant Street
Newburyport, MA 01950
www.contracts365.com

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