

Marin County

Clerk of the Board

Drops Paper and Picks Up Innovation



Clerks figured out how to eliminate 87% of paper documents, publish draft Board minutes in one day rather than six weeks, and expand the use of e-signature to all Board contracts -- all *before* implementing a new technology solution.

The Challenge

The Marin County Clerk of the Board (COB) provides several crucial public services: For county departments, they facilitate agendizing items at the Board of Supervisors meeting for timely approval. For the public, they are responsible for providing a timely, accurate public record of Board actions.

County departments, however, were frequently frustrated at the process of agendizing a Board item, which is subject to multiple layers of approval and paper-dependent. Clerks faced a cumbersome, two-week agenda preparation process that often required fixing submission errors and manually adding content. Between pandemic challenges and limited staff resources, publication of Board minutes took up to six weeks.

Marin stakeholders frequently cited agenda management as needing improvements, and the county identified funds for a new IT platform -- but COB and the County Administrator's Office (CAO) knew that technology doesn't solve problems by itself. They decided to identify and address problems in the agenda management *before* IT implementation.

Common Issues



Constant back and forth email communication



Dependence on paper



Last minute changes to submitted items



Errors in submitted items

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Actions Taken

COB staff and department stakeholders trained together in Intro to Innovation, mapped the existing process of Board item approval, and identified pain points in the existing process. From these sessions, they identified process improvements that could be made immediately and mapped IT requirements for their future software implementation.

Innovations

The COB found several solutions that could be implemented immediately to create significant time savings across many workstreams:



Action minutes: COB staff found that, by restricting their minutes to the actions taken by the Board, they could publish them more quickly and with fewer edits. They also made a decision to publish draft version of the minutes before full Board approval, which almost never results in amendments but typically takes weeks.



Elimination of paper packets. Previously, departments had to send eight collated copies of each Board agenda item to the COB before each Board meeting. Supervisors agreed to rely on electronic agenda packets, saving not only paper, but significant preparation time as well.



Expansion of e-signature. The County had previously approved the use of e-signatures for contracts under \$50,000, but all contracts requiring Board approval still used wet signatures. COB worked with Information Services and Technology (IST) staff to expand the existing initiative to include Board-approved contracts as well.

Results



In addition to these immediate improvements, COB staff identified a series of improvements that make sense to implement alongside the new software; these requirements informed the team's process of vendor selection. When the new system is implemented in 2022, COB expects to eliminate most of the remaining paper, further streamline the approval process, and create a more seamless experience for the Marin County departments and the larger public.



*Soft costs of staff time, assuming an hourly rate of \$40.47 for a Deputy Clerk II.