



>>> Enabling the production of better quality documents more quickly to very tight deadlines

Business overview

Westar Energy is the largest electric energy provider in Kansas, USA. Its energy centers generate electricity from wind, coal, nuclear and natural gas to provide electric energy for nearly 700,000 residential, commercial and industrial customers. Westar employs over 2000 staff and is headquartered in Kansas' state capital, Topeka.

As a regulated electric utility company, Westar works with independent organizations on a wide range of activities to ensure a compliant and regulated working environment, on topics such as utility rates, safety procedures, customer service, environmental issues, etc. This leads to the creation of a large amount of documentation, often requiring input from multiple individuals from both within and outside the company.

The challenge

For Westar Energy, producing documents such as reports, submissions and associated documentation needed for filings with regulators required collaboration with numerous editors and contributors.

Attempting to review and incorporate comments from multiple copies of the same document from numerous editors was a particular challenge. Edits would be made using either the 'track changes' functionality (redlining) for Microsoft® Word® or marking up a hard copy of the document by hand.

In addition to managing multiple copies of the same document and the challenge of deciphering and reconciling all the related comments and changes, when a document went through multiple drafts, comments would often be made on an earlier draft resulting in having to find where the edited language was in the current draft (especially when the suggested change was located in a section that had already been modified).

In short, the process was extremely inefficient and time-consuming, prompting Westar to look for a better, alternative solution.



PleaseReview allowed us to streamline the editing process and turn new versions more quickly. And, because the system allows us to establish clear deadlines, it provides discipline to the process and ensures that all editors are working on the same document at the same time.

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The number one benefit for the business is the ability to include a large number of editors in the drafting process without adding significantly to the time to complete a review. That allows us to receive input from all the experts on a subject while still meeting our deadlines.

The solution

Westar Energy started using PleaseReview in late 2007. Currently it is used primarily by both the legal and regulatory departments, predominantly for the creation of filings for regulatory agencies which generally includes applications, motions, written pre-filed testimony, and legal briefs.

Introducing a new system within an organization can often result in low user adoption, training and other issues. However, from the very outset, user uptake of PleaseReview was high. Marty Bregman, Executive Director, Law at Westar Energy comments, “One of the nice things about PleaseReview is that it can be implemented with little or no training. Because it works seamlessly with Word, we simply add new users, and put them to work on documents. The most often asked question is: ‘what’s my password?’ We almost never encounter users who have problems understanding the command pallets or working with documents in PleaseReview.”

Westar Energy has experienced several clear benefits in using PleaseReview. For example, life has been made much easier for the document owner who can now see all comments from all users at the same time without juggling multiple copies of the same document, deciphering handwriting and obscure editing remarks. The editing process has been completely streamlined, allowing new versions to be turned around far more quickly and with editors able to work on the same document at the same time, the whole process is truly collaborative. Also, as the PleaseReview system allows the document owner to establish clear timelines, discipline has been brought to the process so that deadlines are now met far more easily than before.

Overall, PleaseReview has enabled the production of better quality documents more quickly to very tight deadlines.

As an example, Marty cites a recent litigated case, where as a regulated electric utility, Westar had to file written testimony in rate proceedings before its primary regulator, the Kansas Corporation Commission: “In a recent litigated case, we had to file rebuttal testimony on a large number of issues in a short period of time. PleaseReview enabled us to produce high-quality written testimony with input from a large number of editors in a timely manner.”

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