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Syscon addresses overwhelming workloads

Begoña Garcia was a court clerk who didn't want to change. Already familiar with the system College Park Municipal Court used to process one of suburban Atlanta's largest court workloads, Garcia was resistant when Chief Judge Monica Ewing suggested that Syscon had a better solution.

"When I came to College Park, they were doing 2,000 tickets a month with a manual system," said Ewing of the overworked clerks. "They had a skeletal staff. I immediately recognized that, to improve court efficiency, we had to switch to an electronic system."

No one expected the switch to be easy. As Ewing evaluated various court systems the number of tickets escalated, reaching 2,800 to 3,000 a month. Since she had served as a Fulton County magistrate judge in various cities since 1996, Ewing knew there were alternatives. She had seen Syscon in action in Union City, Georgia, knew how it worked, and knew it would better meet the clerks' needs.

"Syscon had the system that was far better equipped to manage the volume – and College Park was doing close to double the number of tickets in Union City," said Ewing. However, clerks like Garcia couldn't imagine learning a new program when they were already overwhelmed.

"She couldn't even fathom how she was going to do that," said Ewing of Garcia's objection to the change. "I was confident enough in the system that I knew that if we could just get through the transition, she would be okay. The reality is, it doesn't really change my life. For me, it looks good in a court, and I don't have to sign all those tickets and I don't have to do as much paperwork, but the real value of the system is felt by the clerks, not by the court."

As Garcia worked with Syscon's trainers, she began to understand why Ewing had suggested the change. "At first, I didn't think it was a good move, because we were already doing much of the same sort of thing," said Garcia. "But I like it now. If any clerk is looking to save time, this is the way to go. Syscon was here, and they helped us through it, and they still help us through it. I call Josh all the time and they're always there and very helpful."

Both Ewing and Garcia said Syscon's support was the key to helping already-overworked professionals learn new ways to make their workloads more manageable.



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“At the beginning, it’s just like any other new software. You’re kind of lost,” said Garcia of learning new methods. “But they were here for the process, so that was good.”

As the Syscon trainers tutored the clerks, objections soon abated. “Syscon was extraordinary in this conversion, because it was complex and it was high volume and the clerks were fighting against it,” said Ewing. “They probably spent four to six weeks with us, which was extraordinary. Now, when we leave court, we’re done.”

“There are a lot of things that are less time-consuming,” said Garcia. “It’s nice to have all the forms in the computer. It’s nice to have your Failure To Appear process and warrant process and probation process at the click of a button. It has a lot of things that are less time consuming, like the forms being printed out with the person’s information.”

“This is the message I would give,” said this judge when asked what she would tell others considering a Syscon purchase. “It’s a scary, tough conversion,” said Ewing of changes within undermanned, high-volume courts. “But it’s an extraordinary system and helps everybody. To me, I don’t think there’s any program that’s better.”

Syscon, incorporated in 1973, is a leading provider of Windows-based client and server document management software and technology services that address the needs of government entities. Syscon’s family of products and services includes: *PROMIS*, a public records optical management information system; *Court Clerk*, a court records and docket management system; online payment processing; and document preservation to provide digital backup and disaster recovery capabilities for existing paper records. All products feature integrated imaging and are utilized in counties and municipalities with populations ranging from 1,500 to over 750,000.

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