Winscribe Eases the Workload for City of Plymouth Police

The City of Plymouth, Minnesota is home to over 70,000 people and has built a reputation as a quality community in which to live and work. It is this reputation that its citizens, community leaders and the Plymouth Police Department are dedicated to maintaining and enhancing.

The day-to-day activities of the Plymouth Police Department involve a myriad of reports that are created and accessed by numerous parties both inside and outside of the department.

Until recently, any information that needed to be recorded or transcribed was dictated on to analog tapes which then had to be physically delivered to a typist, or to a third-party requiring the information.

"It was very difficult to manage information using tapes", explains Tianhong Zhang, Assistant Manager IT Services for the City of Plymouth. *"The information was hard to transfer, retrieve and archive – and cross-referencing it with our record system was almost impossible."*

The Winscribe Solution

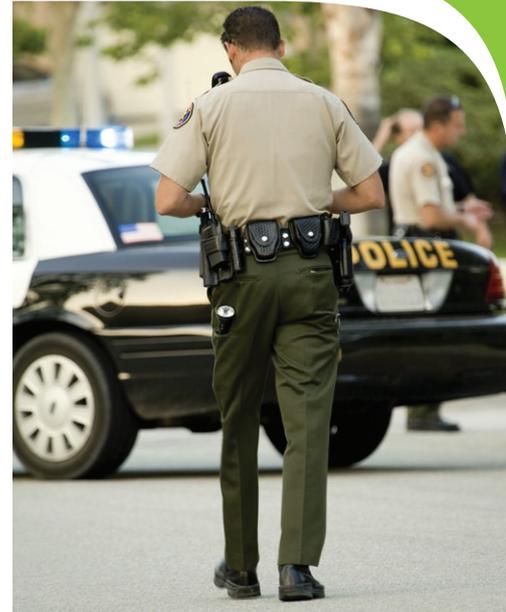### Digital Dictation with Workflow Management

The City issued a Request For Proposal specifying its requirements to eight vendors and received seven responses back. *"Winscribe met our requirements best,"* says Tianhong, *"and offered the best value for money of all the solutions. Another major reason for selecting Winscribe was its simplicity – less steps to implement and less hardware at the back-end."*

"The Police Department has 70 authors primarily using Olympus digital portables for dictation", confirms Tianhong. *"Most of the authors are officers but other personnel such as Lieutenants and Sergeants also use the Winscribe system."*

Initially it was a challenging implementation for both the service provider, Northland Business Systems, and the Police Department as there were some complex routing and archiving requirements.

Some of the users also went through a bit of a learning curve when it came to using the new Olympus digital recorders and downloading their dictation to the Winscribe system, but the final result has been very positive according to Tianhong.

The County notified all local governments agencies that they would mandate them to move to digital dictation in the short term. The City is pleased that it made the move sooner as it realizes the benefits the technology offers.

BENEFITS

- Increased productivity

- Enhanced control and security

- Reduced storage requirements

- Improved workflow

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Tianhong Zhang

*Assistant Manager
IT Services
City of Plymouth*

winscribe DICTATION

Bottom Line Results

Increased Productivity and Control

Productivity has definitely been improved by the move to Winscribe. Personnel no longer have to wait to get access to information and multiple users can be accessing the same file at the same time. Supervisors used to have to wait for reports to be transcribed to read them, but now they can listen to the report, even while it is being typed.

People can access the system anytime, from anywhere on the network and the City can control who has access to files by establishing the appropriate permissions. Tianhong sums it up by saying: *"Retrieval of information is much easier and manageability is greatly enhanced. Users know where the dictation is, how many are waiting, and can access it from anywhere and at anytime – even while it's in the queue waiting to be typed."*

Clerical staff have also been able to manage their workflow more efficiently since the Winscribe system was implemented. They now know how long a file is and can pick a job from the queue according to their schedule. The Supervisor of the Clerical division knows which of her staff is working on a particular job and finds the process status information and reports particularly useful.

Barbara Cox, Administrative Services Manager, explains how the department's budget planning process has also benefited from the reports Winscribe generates. *"When we were previously doing planning and budgets, we had no idea about the number and amount of dictation that was coming through as we did not track it, so we had to make estimates,"* says Barbara. *"This year in the budget process, I was asked to put together some information on hiring an outside transcription service. I was able to simply pull reports off the system for a three month period and put together an accurate report on what the anticipated costs would be using actual data."*

Information archiving is also now much more efficient and the City has saved a huge amount of physical storage space by not having to keep tapes. Future plans include transferring the information currently stored on tapes to the digital file system so that all dictations can be cross-referenced with the record management system.

"The payback on the Winscribe system is clearly good but it's difficult to accurately measure it", admits Tianhong. *"And as with any change, it took some of our users a while to get used to a new way of doing things, but they like it a lot now."*

About Northland Business Systems

For more than three decades, Northland Business Systems has had a single purpose: to meet their customers' business communication needs. They have done this by providing leading-edge dictation systems from leaders in the industry such as Winscribe and Olympus.

Northland's commitment to their customers goes beyond providing them with leading-edge products. They work in partnership with their clients to anticipate and respond to the dynamics of the business environment.

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Winscribe Certified Reseller:

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