

HOW REALTERM TRANSFORMED DATA MANAGEMENT WITH REALTY|SHARE TO DRIVE GLOBAL EFFICIENCY

Business Challenge

As global investment manager Realterm prepared to become a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA) in 2023, there was motivation across the organization to streamline business processes and organize crucial information more strategically.

In operation for more than three decades, Realterm's business blossomed with the full embrace of a global expansion in recent years. The organization quickly grew across North America and in several other countries around the globe.

Information governance stakeholders quickly recognized a necessity to the company's ongoing success: streamlined digital organization.

As all growing organizations, Realterm was experiencing vast information growth as well. As a result, efficiency and regulatory compliance environments felt stress. The company was working with legacy repositories, data sprawl and unintegrated record systems which increased administration and infrastructure maintenance.

"When I began to evaluate the records landscape within Realterm, the SharePoint legacy records libraries presented a challenge for end users," explains Leanne Ross, Records Director, Realterm. "I assessed those multiple records libraries had been created over time – with different look, feel and search capabilities. The goal was to move away from the organic data growth to a formal platform based on a single Source of Truth."

Ross sought support from both legal and IT departments and was ultimately able to combine forces to form a records and data governance symbiotic working group. Even though she was empowered with support from leadership, finding a solution still had its challenges. **"I spent over a year interviewing companies and researching to find what would be the most successful in the Realterm environment."**

Realterm uses Microsoft 365 and has relied heavily on the property management platform Yardi for decades. Ross considered solutions from such esteemed providers as PandaDoc, CollabWare, their trusted partner DocuSign and other service providers, but none were able to truly integrate with the Yardi environment in the way required to support Realterm's vision for an improved records and data governance process.

It was through an email marketing message that Ross was introduced to REALTY|share and ultimately found what she was looking for; **"a way to connect all of our data and collaborative work environment leading to a long-term Records and Information Governance plan and partner to build what we need in house."**



Solution in Action

With the deployment of REALTYIshare, and what Realterm dubbed the Realterm Document Vault (“RDV”), records are now organized by function across the entire organization. Users can still access documents inside SharePoint, but REALTYIshare also provides them with other options to accommodate the way they do their jobs on a daily basis:



Users can upload documents using REALTYIshare Desktop, a Windows tool similar to File Explorer that provides a familiar drag-and-drop approach. Key metadata such as content type, file name, property name and address are already associated with each record, leaving the user with only two responsibilities: choosing the document type as well as the tenant from dropdown menus.



Users may also drag and drop document attachments directly from Outlook into RDV.



With the REALTYIshare Desktop option, everything end users could previously see inside SharePoint is now accessible directly on their desktops, discouraging the duplication of large repositories in OneDrive.



With a direct link to DocuSign through SharePoint, users are able to create a document in Microsoft Word, Excel or PowerPoint, upload it to DocuSign for signature and once executed, the document is automatically deposited in RDV for processing.



It was very important to Ross to meet people where they are. Taking away hurdles and allowing people to work as they want, whether in SharePoint, Outlook email or desktop file explorer, only makes their day easier and ensures that saving and searching records becomes the easiest part of their daily routine.

As part of the REALTYIshare deployment, a common taxonomy was developed to support Realterm users in their work. It allows all users to speak a common language. Users are able to view the taxonomy within each folder and library immediately to quickly place electronic data exactly where it should go.

Workflows have been built into the system as well, setting automated expiration and other notifications to ensure deadlines and critical dates are consistently met.

“The automation and security we’ve built around RDV, along with the integration of other internal and external applications we use, is fantastic. It’s allowing us to leverage Microsoft 365 in a completely new and more innovative way,” explained Ross.

“RDV makes the process of records management easier. Users do not have to spend unnecessary time during the workday looking for needed documents. The system leverages robust search capabilities and preset searches that not only save time but also provides the convenience of easily transferring necessary compliance documents to governing authorities through secure Zip files,” continued Ross.

An additional benefit of REALTYIshare –one that is not offered by competitors – is that users without Yardi licenses can still access important information stored in Yardi. This means that team members can tap into financial data, occupancy details and property team information, just to name a few.



Realization of Results

For Ross, the deployment was a win from the get-go.

“Truly the best part of working with REALTY|share has been the collaboration,” continues Ross. “We spent time with the REALTY|share team explaining our needs and requirements. They listened to my plans for the long-term desired accomplishments of the Realterm Records program and provided solid advice as to how they can help us achieve desired results.”

Now she’s evaluating them through each iterative step of the deployment, using (1) pace of migration and (2) user adoption as her key success metrics.

Unlike some real estate firms, where they have basic business records and real estate transaction records, Realterm has a full range of records flowing through their organization. The real estate investment trust (REIT) and associated accounting are just one portion of their business. There are separate departments for asset management, acquisitions, development, property management, construction, legal, risk management, insurance, accounting and tax, making data migration a major and measurable milestone towards success of their adoption.

The sheer volume of information generated over the decades that has to be migrated would have taken months with other solution providers, but REALTY|share assisted this process with their unique for migration of property documents to a REALTY|share architecture.

User adoption is Ross’ second most important metric of success. Rather than just wondering if they have all end-users placing their records into REALTY|share, she delivers mandatory training to ensure knowledge transfer.

For Ross, user adoption isn’t just about accessing records but also ensuring that employees are actively storing records inside RDV. She has become laser focused on their 100% user adoption pledge. By placing all records into RDV, everyone can do their job more efficiently.

Conclusion

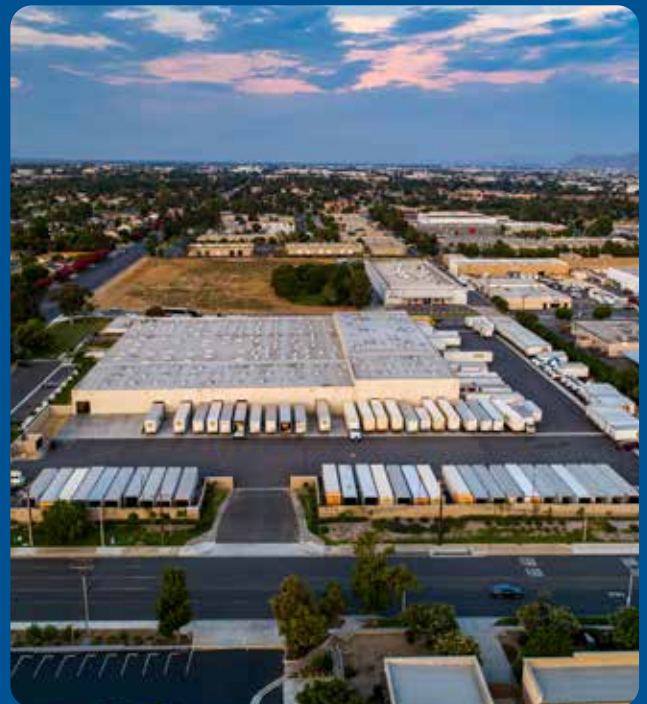
We have to be cognizant of our data. We cannot protect what we do not know we have.

Future Plans for REALTY|share

“We still have more work to do, but we’re well on the road to success with the added ability to innovate which is a huge bonus,” explains Ross.

Ross has engaged various business units, and they are now building and innovating onto what records management has created and their processes are flowing directly into REALTY|share.

Beyond records, the company has future plans for an integration with Microsoft Dynamics as well as other applications they have created in house.



Business Profile

Realterm is an independent manager focused on the transportation industry. We acquire, develop, finance and manage differentiated real estate and infrastructure assets serving land, air, sea and rail networks across the world.

Realterm currently manages over 12 billion USD in assets on behalf of global institutional investors. Learn more at <https://www.realterm.com/>