PowerDMS®

Delaware Valley Trusts

Why Delaware Valley Trusts incentivizes law enforcement agencies to purchase document management software.

Problem

The Delaware Valley Trusts provides property/liability, worker's compensation, and health coverage for over 160 public entities in Pennsylvania and Delaware. As the Director of Risk Control, Peter Erndwein and his team focus most of their time and energy on loss prevention. This includes providing training programs on high-risk issues like use of force, conducting site assessments, and providing consulting services to their members. These are value-added services to help agencies avoid losses and achieve operational excellence.

Due to the potential for large losses associated with law enforcement operations, Delaware Valley Trusts focuses a substantial portion of their loss-prevention efforts on police departments. After years of dealing with law enforcement liability claims, Delaware Valley Trusts recognized the impact department policies have on the outcomes of these claims. For example, in the event of an officer involved shooting, an agency's policies were routinely subject to intense legal scrutiny.

After recognizing policies as key to a members defense, Delaware Valley Trusts determined several vital factors that reduced law enforcement losses in the event of an incident, which include:

- ✓ High-quality policies
- ✓ Documentation of officers receiving and acknowledging the policies
- ✓ Documentation officers were tested on and competent in the policies
- ✓ Achieving law enforcement accreditation

> *"In the early 2000s, mobile data terminals in police vehicles were becoming standard issue. We began looking at systems that would work with the hardware our departments already had."*
>
> Peter Erndwein
> **DIRECTOR OF RISK CONTROL, DELAWARE VALLEY TRUSTS**

Solution

After seeing the importance of high-quality policies and documentation, the Risk Control department decided to offer its member agencies incentives to bring their policies binders into the 21st century and be accessible to officers while on patrol.

Through their interactions with The Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police, Delaware Valley Trusts knew the association had already been successfully working with PowerDMS. At that time, PowerDMS was publishing the Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Program Standards to allow agencies to manage their accreditation process electronically. Delaware Valley Trusts saw an opportunity to continue the success the Chiefs of Police had seen by helping their members purchase policy management software subscriptions through the Trust's risk control grant program. Since the early 2000s, Delaware Valley Trusts has provided their members with a partial reimbursement on the first year as well as on the annual cost of their policy management software subscriptions.

PowerDMS is a cloud-based document management system that securely stores, manages, and disseminates policies, procedures, training, and other crucial content from any internet-enabled device. Electronic document management systems, like PowerDMS, have proven to reduce time spent maintaining policies and collecting officer signatures by 50% or more. The real-time collaboration and reporting help agencies efficiently manage updating policies and obtaining officer signatures.

Most importantly, a document management system greatly improves an agency's defense position in the event of a lawsuit. A robust document management software, like PowerDMS, can produce the policy in use during an incident and prove that officers signed, understood, and were tested on its contents.

Advice to Others:

With limited time and money, Peter suggests helping to eliminate the barriers that prevent agencies from having high-quality policies disseminated to officers in the field. One big selling point of PowerDMS was its ability to not only get policies into the hands of officers but also provide records of officer comprehension and acknowledgment.

This documentation is critical to establishing the credibility of an agency's defense in the courtroom. Additionally, assisting departments in creating the infrastructure needed to utilize a document management system is equally important. Without infrastructure in place, agencies can't take advantage of software solutions like PowerDMS that will modernize their policy management practices. To this end, Delaware Valley Trusts offers their member agencies additional risk control grant money which can be used towards purchasing mobile workstations.

> *"As a risk pool, you have limited means to get your objectives accomplished. A major objective should be to ensure that agencies have high-quality policies and procedures disseminated to officers in the field. One of the ways of doing that is to use a document management system, like PowerDMS."*

Peter Erndwein
DIRECTOR OF RISK CONTROL, DELAWARE VALLEY TRUSTS

About PowerDMS

PowerDMS is the best solution for highly regulated organizations to manage and share crucial information. Over 3,500 customers in the public and private sectors trust PowerDMS to help them reduce risk, improve efficiency, and drive accountability.

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