



Laminin Solutions and M-Files Ensure Smooth Data Flow for Georgia's Water Utility Management

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- Keziah Inniss

MANAGER OF IT AND HR
WATER UTILITY MANAGEMENT

Products Used:

M-Files® Cloud & Teams

Industry:

Water Utility

OVERVIEW:

Scalability is one of the most important features to look for when you're choosing any type of software solution. Successful businesses will grow in many ways over time: you'll hire new employees, expand operations, perhaps add new locations, and open new product lines. All of this growth produces huge amounts of data and reams upon reams of paperwork. Therefore, as you're choosing which software to implement in your business, it's vital to choose one that can grow with your business.

One of our clients, Georgia's [Water Utility Management](#), made the switch to [M-Files](#) years ago, but they soon outgrew their original Basic, on-premises plan. Read on to find out how Laminin Solutions helped them scale up M-Files to fit their company's expanded requirements—and saved them \$25,000 along the way!

GOING WITH THE FLOW SINCE 1970

Water Utility Management (WUM) is the biggest private operator of wastewater systems and community water in the state of Georgia. Headquartered in Savannah, Georgia, since 1970, they now operate 20 wastewater systems and over 200 community water systems. They also offer contract operation and consulting services for other water management companies. All told, they maintain around 34,000 household water connections across 17 counties in southeast Georgia.

In order to streamline their document management—34,000 households create a lot of paperwork!—WUM implemented M-Files around 2019. At the time, they decided to implement the Basic plan on-premises: they would host M-Files on their own servers. This version of M-Files fit their needs at the time: secure document storage with metadata and sharing capabilities.

A BLOCKAGE IN THE SYSTEM

When Keziah Inniss joined WUM four years ago as the manager of IT and HR, she had to teach herself how to use M-Files. The software had been implemented, but no one was quite sure how to take advantage of its capabilities. After using their Basic, on-premises plan, Inniss decided to raise the idea of moving their M-Files installation to the cloud (and, therefore, switching to the M-Files Team plan). The idea of moving to the cloud turned into action when Inniss discovered that WUM's servers would need to be replaced—at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars. She realized that making the switch to the cloud would allow WUM to get rid of two entire servers, cutting their costs dramatically.



**WATER UTILITY
MANAGEMENT**

She went back to company leadership and explained: “Most of our business runs on the cloud already: our billing system, our financial system, all that’s on the cloud. And if we’re going to keep it on premises, we need new servers—and this is how much it’s going to cost. This is our opportunity to knock out some of these servers and no longer have to worry about the maintenance of these servers because everything will be in the cloud.”

After hearing the numbers, leadership gave Inniss the green light to switch to M-Files Cloud.

SCALING UP WITH M-FILES CLOUD

Once she got the go-ahead, Inniss contacted Arnie Cilliers, CEO of Laminin Solutions. She presented him with her budget and time constraints, and Laminin got to work. Upgrading to M-Files Cloud also meant switching from a Basic plan to a Teams plan, so that change needed to be part of the project, too.

“Arnie and his teammate handled the heavy load,” Inniss remembers. “I just had to make sure they had access to what they needed. It was very seamless. They were the hands, eyes, and ears. I just had to click! Even if I hadn’t been technically savvy, it would have gone just as smoothly with their guidance. They made it very easy for me.” Inniss gave the Laminin team a month for the project—the implementation was done in two weeks.

From the beginning, Inniss was adamant that the transition between the on-premises and the cloud implementation be as smooth as possible. “Sometimes when you have a whole bunch of end users,” she says, “they see something different and think that everything’s broken! I didn’t want to have that panic.” In the end, she says, no one panicked: “They probably thought it was just an upgraded version of what we already had.”

In a sense, that’s true: part of M-Files’ scalability is the fact that changing versions can be a relatively simple process. But the benefits of M-Files Cloud and Teams extend beyond just lowered server costs. For one, the Teams plan enables much more workflow automation.

M-Files Cloud also has advanced security features, including

automatic backups, recovery, and geographic replication. All M-Files Cloud data is encrypted, which is one feature that Inniss highlights as important to her company. As the manager of HR, Inniss stores sensitive employee information in M-Files, and she values the stringent security measures and permissions that the cloud version supports.

With M-Files Cloud, WUM will also get the latest M-Files updates and new features automatically. Built on Microsoft Azure, the cloud version is where M-Files is focusing its new developments, including new AI features.

A STREAMLINED FEATURE

Now that WUM has M-Files Cloud, Inniss is looking ahead to what’s next. She says that most of the users at WUM aren’t yet taking advantage of everything M-Files has to offer. She’s going to meet with Arnie soon and see how Laminin can help WUM train its employees and take the next step towards workflow automation within M-Files. “There’s a lot more that can be done within M-Files beyond just using it as a document repository,” she says, “and I’m definitely looking forward to exploring that with the Laminin team.” With their new M-Files Team plan, the workflow automation possibilities are almost limitless.

Inniss estimates that Laminin’s implementation of M-Files Cloud has saved WUM around \$25,000 in one year. “Laminin is a great team to work with,” she says. “They made sure that the project actually came in under budget and early. We met the deadline two weeks prior to when I needed it done. Everything was efficient and seamless. At the end of the day, I was happy. Any little dollar I can save is good with me! I was glad they were able to meet the time restraint I had in addition to saving on the cost. Highly recommend!”

DOES YOUR M-FILES IMPLEMENTATION NEED AN UPGRADE?

If your company is outgrowing its current M-Files implementation, [let’s talk](#)! We’d love to discuss how we can design an upgrade that will ensure streamlined data flow throughout your expanded business. [Contact us today](#) to get started.

ABOUT LAMININ SOLUTIONS

[Optimize Information](#) | [Connect Solutions](#)

Laminin Solutions offers integrated document management and workflow automation products and services that improve efficiency, allowing your business to run smoothly every day. The Laminin team has decades of experience with business, systems, and processes and can help you unlock your business information.