

## imaging

TRENDS, MARKETS AND TECHNOLOGIES

### > case study

# QAI LANDS \$20M-PLUS DEAL BY PROVIDING DISABILITY SUPPORT

By John Longwell

When solution provider Quality Associates Inc. (QAI) began looking over an RFP from the Social Security Administration, it noticed that an unusually large section was devoted to compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Over the past three years, Section 508 has had its widest impact on spurring federal agencies to make their Web sites accessible to disabled users. But in this case, the SSA, which employs more disabled workers than any other federal agency, wanted to ensure that disabled workers would be able to operate new scanning stations the agency purchased to help it automate its backlogged disability claims-handling process.

The RFP was a wake-up call for QAI, which had been selling imaging capture software and services to the federal government for 10 years. It also turned out to be a wake-up call for the four or five competitors that lost out to QAI in

bidding for the contract.

"They all addressed [Section 508] in their own way," said Scott Swidersky, director of the information systems division of QAI, Columbia, Md. "We just ended up with a better understanding of what the SSA was looking for."

For the SSA project, QAI enlisted the help of the Bartimaeus Group, McLean, Va., a solution provider that specializes in accessibility solutions. QAI has been selling imaging software from Irvine, Calif.-based Kofax for 10 years, and Bartimaeus, which employs eight programmers who are blind, helped QAI develop scripts that integrate Kofax's Ascent Capture software with client applications to provide voice recognition, screen reading, screen magnification and Braille display output.

Mary Smith, vice president of Bartimaeus, said making software accessible is a complicated process due to the variety of disabilities to address. "In order to understand how screen-reading software works,



Scott Swidersky says QAI recognized the importance of the Section 508 requirements to the SSA, which enabled it to win the bid.

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## anatomy of a solution

**COMPANY:** Quality Associates Inc., Columbia, Md.

**FOCUS:** Document imaging; solution sales to federal government

**PROBLEM & SOLUTION:** Making it possible for disabled workers to operate scanning stations through integration of imaging capture software with various applications

**PRODUCTS & SERVICES USED:** Kofax Ascent platform

**LESSONS LEARNED:**

- > Section 508 requirements extend beyond Web sites to impact potentially any technology being deployed by the federal government.
- > Partnering with a consultant that specializes in Section 508 compliance provides an edge in winning federal business.

you have to know how to use it very well," she said. "It's complicated. ... My guys do it every day. It's part of their world."

The QAI award included an initial \$3 million purchase of licenses for Kofax Ascent Capture scan stations, recognition servers and release servers. And the five-year \$20.9 million blank purchase agreement, which may grow even higher, is one of the largest sales of capture software ever completed,

according to Robert Markham, a senior analyst at Forrester Research.

In that regard, the sale is indicative of the reawakened imaging market that, by Forrester's estimates, has been growing faster over the last year and a half than any other segment of the content management market—and is likely to do so again this year thanks to the plummeting price of scanners, growing use of multifunction devices and rising deployment of distributed scanning applications.

The SSA will scan social security cards, birth certificates and other documents associated with disability claims at about 100 sites. The documents will be fed into an IBM Content Manager-based system on the back-end to support the disability claims appeals process.

The SSA is ahead of the curve in Section 508 compliance, and other agencies are likely to follow its lead and require compliance for a wider range of applications.

Markham said the deal also should prompt vendors to evaluate this opportunity. "Not too many vendors support Section 508, especially in imaging," he said. "The interesting thing is you can build those capabilities in. It's just that most vendors don't think about it."

Anthony Macciola, vice president of marketing at Kofax, said the company plans to do just that. Kofax has helped partners customize its software and is making future releases more accessible to disabled users, Macciola said.

As for QAI, it is building a marketing campaign around the contract award and its ability to meet Section 508 guidelines. "We have a new animal out there called Section 508," Swidersky said.

Quality Associates, Inc. (QAI) offers scalable document management and imaging solutions enabling you to publish documents on the web, distribute on CD and access data over corporate network servers anytime, anywhere. QAI helps to increase your productivity, speed data distribution, and decrease storage costs. We forge quality business relationships that work for you.



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