

Canon and their imageRUNNER team up with Strategic to score 200% ROI

Introduction

"We are saving about \$100,000 a year in paper, Federal Express bills, faxing, and storage costs. Of even greater value," continues Louis Gucciardo, Canon's Director of Information Technology, "is our savings in soft dollars." This is why Canon Business Solutions chose Strategic Business Systems to streamline a costly order processing system. The results include: increased productivity, enhanced customer service, and eliminated fines and write-offs.

About the Customer

Canon Business Solutions, Inc. of Lyndhurst, NJ, is responsible for sales of Canon products in the eastern United States, [<http://www.solutions.canon.com>]. With this responsibility comes valuable experience in customer satisfaction, not only in the high quality of Canon products, but in post-sales customer support as well.

The Customer Challenge

Sales orders are generated at the regional sales offices, and typically consist of 8-10 pages of various documents. Multiple copies of the orders were required for the branch and headquarters. Once the order was fulfilled, the headquarters' copy was filmed and stored.

The large quantity of sales-generated documents and the time required to microfiche each, resulted in this process falling far behind. "When we began the project there was a 2-year backlog of documents" says Lou. Storage and retrieval of these documents became a serious issue. Canon kept recent documents on-site, however, closed files were archived at an external records storage company, incurring storage costs of over \$2,000 monthly with additional charges to ship documents back on demand.

Customer service representatives needed to access these documents on a regular basis for order verification, warranty status, or service requests. The storage method did not allow for any immediate response to the inquiries. It was taking hours to find and retrieve documents on-site, or worse, days to find and ship documents from the remote storage company - at Canon's expense.



Canon's imageRUNNER™ is unsurpassed for its document publishing productivity

The existing storage process aggravated other concerns; attempts to merge late-arriving documents to the sales order package proved difficult and time-consuming. There was also a chance that packages could be misfiled or lost, which could be costly if Proof of Delivery (POD) or sales tax exemption documents were involved.

Canon's Requirements

Canon's objective was to streamline the sales order process, reduce paper and storage costs, and improve customer service. In addition to Canon's requirements to improve the process, Canon expressed a need to improve their report distribution.

The requirements for the content management system were:

- Compatibility with Canon's IBM AS/400®, including the ability to retrieve, distribute, and print remotely
- Incorporating different types of documents into the packages: invoices, warranties, maintenance agreements, sales tax exemptions, coupons, etc.
- Having indexing capability
- Enhancing distribution of reports to remote sites
- Establishing levels of security by reports, by groups, and by individuals
- Enabling electronic transmission of documents

Strategic's Solution

Lou assigned Tom Ainsworth, Systems Analyst, to select and implement a content management solution. Although there are many business solution providers, Tom selected Strategic Business Systems of Ramsey, New Jersey, to design and implement a new automated process. Strategic, a certified Business Partner with both IBM and Metafile Information Systems, was uniquely qualified to provide the right solution. Metafile integrates Computer Output to Laser Disk (COLD) and document imaging. Strategic's solution integrates Metafile's COLD and MetaViewer products with Canon's imageRUNNER and their IBM AS/400.

For the solution's software, Metafile fully met and exceeded all of Canon's requirements. Tom was impressed, "Metafile's COLD storage system is the best we have seen. Its full-text search feature makes it possible to find documents even with very incomplete information...it has significant features that make it possible to assign people and classes of documents to groups and control which groups have access to each document."

The New Automated Process

Now, at the regional sales offices each sales order is uniquely identified by a bar code and scanned using Canon's imageRUNNER, eliminating the need for manual data entry. The scanned data is transferred to a network folder at headquarters. The folder is continuously polled for new scans, which are then imported into MetaViewer Enterprise.

Canon's AS/400 authenticates each bar code through their Order Entry system, and populates MetaViewer with additional indices. The documents are stored in Metafile and accessed in seconds. A single Metafile query retrieves both scanned sales orders and related AS/400 data. "The big advantage is that we can get our customers the information they need right away," says Lou.

Results

Once the solution was implemented, it proved to be an immediate success. Now customers are resolving their own inquiries and the few that require individual support are answered instantly, rather than waiting 1-2 days for callbacks. Storage costs have been slashed from \$2,000 to \$100 per month, and paper used for reports was reduced from 15 boxes to just 2 or 3. Additionally, microfilm and microfiche processing was eliminated.

While the cost savings are easily calculated, the indirect benefits continue to grow. "We found the cost of an uncollected bill, a timely proof of delivery, more efficient processes, and quicker customer response, to be incalculable. But it's clear that we are saving substantial monies and as we move to take advantage of additional capabilities of the system, our savings will continue to increase," boasts Lou. Beyond the cost savings and improved customer support, the solution provided additional benefits. Lou emphasizes, "During a state sales tax audit, we were asked to produce tax-exempt certificates for several hundred customers. In the past, we would have had to send a team of people to the storage site for weeks to locate the documents. With Strategic's solution, one person was able to locate all the

documents in a day or two. This saved us weeks of man-hours and proved our compliance."



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