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Challenges:

- Capture, storage and processing of reorder tickets problematic and inefficient
- Expensive and outdated scanning equipment limited and difficult to maintain
- Employee productivity reduced due to manual process of handling reorder tickets

Benefits:

- Marked improvement in turn around time
- Significant reductions in errors on order entry
- Significant return on investment
- Dramatic reduction in employee downtime

Hallmark Cards, Inc.

Hallmark Cards, Inc. says it best with a Fujitsu scanner



Founded in 1910, Hallmark Cards, Inc is the goliath of greeting card companies. They are the personal expression industry leader and are widely known as the consumer brand of choice. The company's cards are sold under brand names such as Hallmark, Shoebox, and Ambassador and can be found in more than 42,000 United States retail stores. Currently the company employs over 18,000 people.

Given the company's size, it takes a great deal of effort and innovation to keep Hallmark running smoothly and profitably. As a result, the company pays close attention to its operational efficiencies. Hallmark has to make sure that its content management, business process automation, and simplification of both critical and daily decision-making interconnect flawlessly to ensure that their business runs as it should.

In its ongoing mission to improve efficiency, Hallmark found that the capture, processing and storage of its reorder tickets – recurring customer requests for a standard order – were problematic and inefficient. In 1989, Hallmark implemented a solution to scan its reorder tickets using a basic content management system. The original cost of the scanners and the supporting software cost well over \$250,000 with substantial support requirements, including seven personal computers and considerable staff involvement. In addition to being expensive and cumbersome, the old system would only allow for the reorder tickets to be scanned face up and orientated the correct way.

When an error occurred, a Hallmark employee would have to retrieve the reorder ticket, review the information and manually process the request. These additional steps hurt Hallmark's productivity because employees were pulled away from their other duties. Additionally, in the decade that passed since its implementation, the scanning equipment became outdated and was very expensive to maintain.

Recognizing the need to update the system, Hallmark set out to revamp their content management process. The first step in making that happen was selecting a system integrator that could create an effective solution. Hallmark was looking for three primary characteristics: price, experience and reputation. Hallmark turned to Kansas City, MO-based Cutting Edge Solutions (CES) due to their reputation for providing efficient solutions. CES prides itself on its ability to reliably deliver solutions that enable individuals to collaboratively create, manage, deliver and archive the content that drives business operations.

Speed, Flexibility, Reliability and Accuracy Create Success

The Hallmark reorder ticket project presented CES with several challenges from a capture perspective. Hallmark receives 5,000 to 15,000 reorder tickets daily which have varying shades of green that need to be

captured and processed uniformly for consistency. Incoming tickets are also intermittently covered in glitter and dust. The solution had to resolve those problems while having the functionality to capture all of the data and “read” a variety of formats including check boxes (OMR), machine print (OCR) and hand print (ICR). CES set out to create a solution that would completely transform Hallmark’s dated system at a lower cost than the previous installation with significantly higher accuracy. They designed a system using scanners from market-leader Fujitsu, VRS functionality from Kofax, and “Task Master” Capture Software from Datacap. All told, the implementation cost less than \$70,000.

To address Hallmark’s complex data capture challenges, CES enlisted Fujitsu fi-4860C productiongrade color scanners based on a variety of factors including outstanding paper handling, ease of use, color scanning abilities, high quality and value. Across the entire product line Fujitsu scanners are known for having an extremely low error rate which was important to CES as Hallmark was attempting to reduce the staff dedicated to this document management application. CES also knew that Hallmark needed to scan many thousand reorder tickets daily and was drawn to the 10,000 page per day duty cycle.

Another important feature that attracted CES to the Fujitsu fi-4860C scanners was its dual color CCD arrays that can scan both sides of a page in one pass. That functionally enabled Hallmark to scan 63 pages-per-minute (ppm) and 125 images-per-minute (ipm), at 200 dpi, in color, grayscale or monochrome. Additionally, to address Hallmark’s advanced paper handling requirements, the Fujitsu fi-4860C scanners came with a 500-page automatic document feeder (ADF) that accommodates a wide range of document sizes and is equipped with ultrasonic double feed detection.

CES also utilized an optional VRS configuration from Kofax for advanced imaging processing technology including automatic crop, deskew and brightness. The brightness regulation functionality was instrumental in helping Hallmark address the reorder ticket shading problems that they had with the previous installation.

The new system has resulted in a dramatic reduction in employee preparation time and, consequently, a significant return on investment. With the previous system it would take three to four people an average of four to five hours to process the daily batch tickets. Now one dedicated employee can easily handle the task in five hours or less. As a result, Hallmark was able to reallocate three full time employees to more strategic functions immediately after the implementation.

From a technical perspective, there are several factors that directly contributed to the dramatic reduction in time and cost requirements. First, the new Fujitsu scanners accept tickets that are torn, crumpled and/or have tape on them while the previous scanner could not handle those variables. Furthermore, employees no longer have to manually sort the tickets because the Fujitsu fi-4860C solution has duplex (two-sided) scanning functionality. Also, when paired with the Datacap Task Master Software Suite, the document management system easily identifies which side of the reorder ticket is being presented. It then automatically deletes the back side of the ticket and the front side is orientated properly.

After the information is captured, the Datacap capture software quickly and accurately reads the information and stores it in an intuitive format. Each ticket is processed in less than eight tenths of a second. The software gives each ticket an accuracy rating, and in the rare instance that the system is not 100% sure of the content, the system operator is alerted and manually confirms accuracy.

“When Hallmark enlisted our services to revamp its ECM practices, we set out to create a solution that was effective, inexpensive and highly accurate,” said Jack Roberts, co-founder, CES. “Due to the exceptional image quality that the Fujitsu scanners provide, Hallmark is now able to get less than a 2% error rate on their

scanning. When you couple that with the fact that Hallmark no longer has to manually orient each ticket because the Fujitsu fi-4860C scanner provides duplex scanning, the value of the implementation is very apparent.”

Due to the low start up costs, Hallmark was able to achieve a 100% return on investment in less than six months. Since the implementation of its new system, the company has experienced a marked improvement in its turn around time, significant reductions in errors on order entry and a huge decrease in employee time allocated for document management functions.

Companies involved in the implementation:

Hallmark (Customer): www.hallmark.com

CES (VAR): www.ces-inc.com

Kofax (VRS Manufacturer): www.kofax.com

Datacap (Capture Software Manufacturer): www.datacap.com

Fujitsu (Scanner Manufacturer): www.fcpa.fujitsu.com

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For more information:

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