

Children's Art Project Significantly Reduces Turnaround Time and Order Processing Costs by Converting to Digital Print-On-Demand Workflow

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- **Improve turnaround time and product value for customers**
- **Reduce waste and simplify order processing**

DESCRIPTION

The Children's Art Project is a nonprofit organization which raises money to help make life better for children with cancer through worldwide sales of seasonal note cards, gift items, and miscellaneous merchandise which are imprinted with artwork produced by pediatric patients at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Many of the greeting cards are produced as static runs and sold in retail stores. But as an additional source of revenue, the Children's Art Project (CAP) also offers cards and envelopes imprinted with a customer's name. Historically, the imprinted cards and envelopes had been produced using a small single-color offset press to overprint the name onto offset printed full-color shells.

The overprinting method incurred considerable waste inherent with offset printing as well as costs due to inventory storage, and also required a rather long turnaround time of 2-3 weeks. Additionally, the ordering process was cumbersome and prone to errors. Many orders came in by phone or fax, and then had to be keyed into CAP's internal system by temporary workers or volunteers. Although customers could place orders on the CAP website, CAP personnel still had to manually enter the orders into the proprietary CAP system to maintain a record of the orders.

In 2006, the CAP marketing department realized that digital technology could solve many of the issues with the overprinting process. Thus, the solicitation for bids for the upcoming seasons requested, but was not limited to, incorporating a digital workflow. ImageSet, one of 30 companies who bid, was awarded the contract for the 2006-2008 seasons.

ImageSet proposed using its ImageSet Direct™ web-to-print technology to set up an online catalogue of all the available cards where customers could order online. After logging on to the CAP website, customers could choose a specific card design, personalize their message, pick a font and color for the message, add signatures or logos, add envelope address in a font and color of their choice, and view an online proof of both the card and the accompanying envelope.

The new system was successfully launched in August of 2006. Errors due to inaccurate data input were significantly reduced, and turnaround time was reduced from 2-3 weeks to less than 5 business days. Additional improvements were made to the system in 2007, by adding the ability to upload personal color photos for printing on the card, as well as online payment.

The new workflow made it possible for ImageSet to process over 3,500 individual orders, with quantities ranging from 50 to 10,000, representing 1.8 million cards and envelopes, over a 3.5 month timeframe. Of the 3,500 orders, virtually none of the cards had problems due to order processing or shipping, an improvement attributable to the new online ordering system.

RESULTS

- **Turnaround time was reduced from 2-3 weeks to less than 5 business days**
- **Errors due to order entry were significantly reduced**
- **Labor costs for order processing were reduced due to customers being able to place their own orders online**
- **Customers now have additional options: personalizing the greeting, custom message, and color photos**
- **Customers now have more choices of artwork due to the print-on-demand concept**
- **Customers can see a live preview of their card as they personalize it**

CLIENT COMMENT

The Children's Art Project staff was extremely happy with the new online ordering system and will continue to work with ImageSet to add new features and new products.