

BizTech Solutions, Inc. Case Study:

Conestoga Eliminates Busy Signals, Saves Time & Money



ISV/Software Solutions

About Conestoga Wood Specialties

Conestoga Wood Specialties is the cabinet industry's leading supplier of wood doors and components, with a staff of over 2,100 personnel. Conestoga is headquartered in East Earl, PA, and has seven plants strategically located in Arkansas, Maryland, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. The company sells exclusively to woodworking professionals, creating design solutions that meet the needs of the most discriminating clients.

The Business Challenge

At Conestoga Wood Specialties, business growth means client and contractor recognition of excellence in Conestoga's products, along with high expectations of superior customer service. It also means rapid growth in terms of incoming fax order volumes, which, in the past, had tied up regionally-dedicated fax machines and had driven up processing costs. Additional fax machines, paper, toner, and staff overtime were all necessary to handle the increasing workload. It was inconvenient and not uncommon for a contractor to have to make multiple attempts to fax in their order, whether for thousands of doors or just a single piece of cabinetry.



Strategic Actions

The Conestoga management team knew they needed to improve their incoming order process so as to avoid inconveniencing customers with busy signals from tied up fax machines. The process, which handles hundreds of orders per day, was further bogged down by the printing, distributing, filing and verification of the incoming orders. With so much paper moving around, customer service was suffering and processing costs were continuing to rise.

The team at Conestoga realized they needed to enlist outside help to reach their goals:

- Provide better customer service
- Reduce operating costs
- Improve operational efficiency
- Maintain their investment in their existing AS/400-based order processing system

The Solution

BizTech Solutions, Inc. was selected to partner with Conestoga to meet their goals and to position the company to handle additional business growth for the foreseeable future.

The first problem to tackle was how to increase the input capacity for the order process, without negatively impacting the customer. BizTech implemented two fax servers which work in tandem, enabling up to 16 customer orders to be received simultaneously. Each order is automatically routed to the appropriate region for processing. In the old environment, there were one or more dedicated fax machines for each region, and no means to share capacity. The new fax servers together support 16 lines which are available to all regions depending on immediate need.

The next issue was to streamline the order processing operation. Rather than printing and manually routing every incoming order, the new system converts the incoming faxes into digital images which are routed to various work queues for processing. The first step is for a customer service representative (CSR) to view the order to identify the customer and order type. Next, the order moves to a processing queue and, if requested, a confirmation fax is sent back to the customer, confirming the order has been received and is being processed.

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The orders in the processing queue are sorted by priority and time. Each CSR works from their own regional queues, and can also help with overflow in other queues/regions. Using dual monitors, an Order Entry CSR opens the first item in the regional work queue (highest priority is sorted on top) and, while viewing the image of the order on one monitor, enters the data into the Conestoga AS/400 order entry screen on the other. The Conestoga order number, which is assigned by their order entry application, is automatically attached to the image and moved forward to the next step in the workflow for verification.

The Verification CSR reviews the original image and the data which was entered, to validate the accuracy of the order. The order is then released and is forwarded by the AS/400 application to manufacturing. The customer's original faxed order is archived automatically within the Microsoft SharePoint document repository—immediately available for online access.

The Benefits

The solution developed by BizTech has enabled Conestoga to improve customer service & operational efficiency and to save money, with virtually no change to the order submission process for their customers. Overhead costs for additional fax machines, toner, paper, and staff overtime have been eliminated.

The system is designed to automatically update the SharePoint metadata when a change is made to orders in the AS/400 order entry application after a document has been archived. The system also handles emailed orders with file attachments by way of an automated process which monitors and routes the email and attachment to the work queues.

Doing away with the printing and manual routing of orders has freed up CSRs' time to focus more on servicing customers and less on trying to track down where a particular order form is in the process, or where it might have been misplaced. Through the tight system integration between the image application and the order entry system, CSRs can immediately access a customer's complete order history and the supporting image documents while the customer is still on the phone, reducing callbacks and making happier customers.

Technologies Used

- Captaris RightFax
- Captaris Workflow
- Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services V2
- BizTech Solutions' API
- Microsoft SQL Database
- BizTech Solutions' Order Processing Application

About BizTech Solutions

BizTech Solutions, Inc. (www.forbiztech.com) is a field-managed Microsoft Gold Partner and ISV Managed Partner, providing “best of breed” systems integration for Work Process Automation and Web Business Solutions. BizTech is a single source supplier of enterprise products for automation, workflow, document management, digital signing, and e-commerce applications across numerous industries.



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