Atlantic Software Technologies, Inc. (AST) Custom Imprinting

Partner Solution

- **Target Industry**
  Industrial Products

- **Business Applications**
  Integrated Custom Manufacturing
  Order Fulfillment
  Order Management and Tracking

- **Products**
  IBM FileNet Business Process Manager
  IBM FileNet Capture Professional
  IBM FileNet Content Manager
  IBM FileNet Image Manager
  IBM FileNet Team Collaboration Manager

Atlantic Software
TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
www.astworld.com

Business Challenge

With the prevalent use of the Internet, consumers have been empowered to customize the look and feel of a wide range of products.

Today, many manufacturers seek to enable customers to order, through the Web or via the phone, products customized to their specifications. Take for example, a gift card imprinted with a custom message, picture or logo.

To this end, the challenge is to take user-provided content and specifications such as message text, picture or logo and enable the user to see how it would appear on the final product. Additionally, to achieve this customization, and to achieve true automation and reduce costs, certain aspects of the manufacturing process have to be automated, such as printing of plates for imprinting.

This customization process requires a streamlined method of collecting customer input and validating the exact specifications for the final product. Additionally, manufacturers require integration with existing order management systems which run and drive the business. Workflows must incorporate all elements from design, verification and final customer approval, leveraging both Internet and email.

Finally, manufacturers require solutions that not only integrate with back office applications, but also integrate with the shop floor, to trigger and manage portions of the automated manufacturing hardware required to produce custom products.

Solution

The AST Custom Imprinting solution provides manufacturers with a proven process for customized manufacturing, with end-to-end workflow from order input to final order fulfillment. The solution is fully integrated with fax and email systems.

AST streamlines and automates processes as follows:

Inbound Order Processing/Customer Service – An order for custom imprinting is automatically routed to the proper customer service representative for review. The orders are received via phone, fax or the Web.

Specifications Preview and Design – The Designers/Artists pickup the orders from a queue and refine the product with specifications provided by the customer. Once completed, the specifications in the source file formats are checked into IBM's Enterprise Content Management (ECM) suite of products for version management. The system automatically generates the preview files in PDF format from EPS and other file formats and forwards them in an email message to the customer.

Scheduling and Production – Through the workflow scheduling review production requirements and order size. Orders are queued for specific printing machinery to run the job. Automated processes create the proper layout from templates for the specific printing machine and rasterize the encapsulated postscript artwork. During rasterization color screens for dithering and device calibration adjustments for brightness are applied to shaded artwork. Production orders are selected by an automation routine based on priority and a robot loads the desired plate material into a stochastic laser device. Images are burned to plate material and are ready for use in printing machines.

Quality Control – Rejected orders are tracked by artist and machine along with reason codes to spot trends and improve output.

Shipping – Orders are shipped to customers and automated notifications are sent out.

Order Fulfillment – As a final step, the workflow then routes the work item to the relevant manufacturing step. During this process, the specification files are automatically analyzed to determine how the order is to be fulfilled.

Value Proposition

In use for more than five years in the manufacturing industry, AST's Custom Imprinting solution streamlines the custom order management process and reduces fulfillment errors. It improves customer satisfaction levels, providing the customer with the opportunity to preview exactly how the finished product will look.

Manufacturers leveraging the AST Custom Imprinting solution have achieved the following ROI:

- Reduced head count;

- Reduced order fulfillment time and therefore higher throughput;

- Higher customer satisfaction;

- Improved order tracking; and,

- Improved ability to track resource utilization.

Company Description

Atlantic Software Technologies, Inc. (AST) is dedicated to helping its clients improve business performance through the application of content management and workflow technologies and products. Through innovative business process improvement, AST's products and solutions help companies achieve advantages in the management and communication of critical information throughout their value chains and increase revenues and profitability.

For more information, please contact:

Jack D'Agostaro
+1 732 223 8810
jdagostaro@astworld.com

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