

Driving Performance, By Design

ANCOR INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FINDS WAYS TO ADD VALUE AT LOWER COSTS

Based in Troy Michigan, just outside of Detroit, Ancor Information Management's first customers were America's automobile manufacturers. And from the beginning, they set out to add a key ingredient to the print and mail business: information and data management.

Their success with personalized printing and complex customer communications for the Big Three auto manufacturers led to rapid growth. Today, Ancor operates three distinct divisions: one focused on automotive labeling and statement processing; the second on utilities statements; and the third on card services for membership and healthcare communications. Across the board, they offer data management, file processing, print services, inserting, mail services and automated electronic solutions.

Ancor is set up to meet the unique needs of their clients. In recent years, however, the needs of all their clients in the automotive industry have included an element of expense reduction. So when Ancor wanted to find a creative way to reduce costs – while adding new capabilities and value – they called upon Pitney Bowes.

THE VALUE OF INTELLIGENT DESIGN

One of the largest programs Ancor manages is an auto warranty campaign, which involves the printing and mailing of 40,000 – 50,000 multi-component customer communications every single day. For many years, Ancor printed, folded and matched the three personalized components separately across multiple work cells, before moving them to several swing-arm inserters to complete the job. This process was time-consuming and labor intense – and deep inside, they knew there was a better way.

“We set out to re-look the entire process with three clear goals,” recalls Dave Bartkowiak, Ancor's Director of Operations. “We wanted to eliminate the offline folding, which was the most time-consuming, labor-intensive part of the process. We wanted to reduce labor overall. And we felt there was an opportunity to increase the accuracy of the three-way match.



“We spoke with several different vendors and walked them through the application,” Bartkowiak continues. “Pitney Bowes came back quickly with an intelligent design that could automate the entire process – including the three-way match. All of the other vendors struggled.”

Today, Ancor runs this application on a six-station FPS™ Inserting System. One of the key elements of the design was the integration of 2D barcodes and cameras. The system was also configured with an input merging component that allows Ancor to match and combine two print streams into a single folded document – all in a single operation.

HIGH-VOLUME SAVINGS – OF TIME AND MONEY

While the design looked good on paper, the performance was even better. “Previously we ran this job across two shifts and two inserters,” Bartkowiak details. “With a single Pitney Bowes FPS™ system, we've eliminated the offline folding, so now we can go directly from printing to inserting using only two operators instead of eight. All in, we're saving 600 hours in labor each and every month.

“Not only did we cut our labor expenses – we reduced the turnaround on this job by half. Now we can run the entire count in a single eight-hour shift. The nice part is – Pitney Bowes provided us with estimated savings up front, and the actual performance hit the mark perfectly. In a matter of weeks, we were surpassing every goal we established.”

MORE POWERFUL MARKETING, TOO

While Ancor's client appreciated the savings, they soon found that Pitney Bowes technology offered several other advantages as well. By switching from 3 of 9 to the smaller 2D barcodes, for example, there was now much more space to print relevant, customer-oriented information.

"The marketing staff definitely enjoys the added flexibility," Bartkowiak says with a smile. "Before, they couldn't do selective inserting. Now that everything runs in line, they can use the same 2D barcode technology to handle selective inserting – which allows them to target their messages more effectively. That's something they took advantage of right away."

ADDED FLEXIBILITY AND CONTINUITY

The Pitney Bowes FPS™ inserter provides flexibility that helps Ancor maximize asset utilization and build redundancies into their entire operation, even across its various business units.

"With the flexibility of the FPS™ technology, we were able to design a system that could also handle the statement production for a separate division that serves utilities clients. And it only takes 15 minutes to change over. If one of our statement machines goes down, or if we need to handle overflow volume, it's easy to run on the Pitney Bowes system. We have other machines that we can convert – but none that can make the transition so quickly.

BUILDING ON A VISION

Intelligent design. Reduced costs. Relevant marketing. Greater flexibility. Everything Pitney Bowes offered supported Ancor's vision of transforming customer data into effective communications.

"We've used competitive products for years," Bartkowiak adds, "and to switch over to a Pitney Bowes machine, that's something different, something new for us. One of the biggest surprises I had was how easily the staff took to the Pitney Bowes technology. Overall, I can't say how pleased I am with Pitney Bowes."

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*–Dave Bartkowiak, Director of Operations
Ancor Information Management*



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