

Integrated Messaging is the Key to Reduced Interaction Costs

by Karl Schumacher



The key challenge for document management professionals in the bear market of 2002 will be implementing projects that reduce cost and enhance efficiency. Efficient communications between suppliers, service providers and customers is critical to the success of any business. Especially during an economic downturn, businesses need to eliminate time-consuming, labor-intensive manual processes to communicate with their business partners, transmit documents and buy and sell products and services.

Virtually everything a company does involves “interaction costs”—the expenses incurred to gain revenue from customers and to get different people and companies to work together. Interaction costs account for over half of all labor-related expenditures in the U.S. But companies can lower these expenses dramatically—20 to 40 percent a year—by interacting with customers, partners, suppliers and employees, and by adopting a more efficient, closed-loop messaging model.

There are five distinct components in a closed-loop messaging model: creation, production, distribution, receiving and updating. The key to unlock their synergy is integration.

No longer are business communications conducted on a one-way “business-to-customer” channel. Increasingly, they must be viewed as the key tool in a continuous, multifaceted, closed-loop process, which is refreshed as each inbound message adds new information.

The goal is to deepen your understanding of each customer and stay in repeated contact with customers via a continuing stream of messages that are highly targeted to individual needs, flawless in appearance and assembly, produced promptly, delivered in a manner of the customer’s choosing, and structured to facilitate easy customer action.

Yet too many businesses today still manage customer communications via “silos” or functions that are not linked

together in any cohesive manner. For example, marketing creates the message, IT maintains a list of customers, and the print/mail/finish center produces the messages. Other internal functions, such as customer service, regulatory compliance, and accounts receivable and billing are all isolated as well.

An integrated, Closed-Loop Process

Decisively defining the strategic objective of a particular document at the time of creation drives the process, from data cleansing and document composition to flexible delivery and enrichment, which in turn refreshes the messaging process in preparation of the next event. Real value comes from integrating the various internal functions and “islands of data” to support a holistic messaging process.

Companies employing this approach focus on continuous improvement in customer messaging in all of its media and move toward maximum productivity, the lowest operational cost, and seamless, high-quality customer service.

Pitney Bowes docSense is emphasizing integration as never before. We have assembled a comprehensive suite of resources, compatible with key hardware components. This rich array of software products, skilled professional and technical services, including process re-engineering and systems integration expertise—along with partnerships with key vendors and a range of financing options—helps our customers link these previously isolated internal processes and facilitates the shift to strategic message management.

With our leading edge technology and global market reach, Pitney Bowes docSense is positioned well to promote this messaging model and help businesses interact with their customers and each other in a cost effective, efficient manner—our theme for 2002.

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