An IMSCAN Case Study

Viking Direct

Viking Direct, part of Office Depot Inc., is the UK's leading office supplies company. Throughout its fifteen year history in the UK, the company has achieved huge success through its total commitment to customer service.

To ensure rapid response and same-day delivery to its customers, Viking has distribution centres in Leicester, London, Manchester and Dublin each serving the local area. An order processing system running from an IBM AS400 produces manifest documents containing consignment details and delivery addresses which are given to drivers together with goods for delivery in a process that Viking calls Direct Vehicle Off-Loading (DVO). DVO is essentially the delivery of orders from the DC direct to the customer, avoiding further hubs and warehouse depots that add to delivery timescales.

"IMSCAN is certainly one of the best systems on the market for delivering real and quantifiable benefits throughout an organisation."

Roger Thompson
Returns Manager, Viking Direct

The Challenge

During 1999, the company became aware that its system for filing and retrieving these documents was a cumbersome, time-consuming affair and was having an unfavourable impact on customer service – a situation that Viking simply could not tolerate. It became the task of Returns Manager, Roger Thompson, to implement a solution.

He explains, "Once a delivery had been made the driver was supposed to return the manifest documents to the DC (distribution centre) for manual filing. Unfortunately, this was an unmonitored process so we could not be sure that documents had been returned and therefore could not respond satisfactorily to customer queries. We were expecting the drivers to verify the order delivery through the AS400 system rather than having the original manifest, with a signature from the customer and other relevant information, properly filed. Similarly, when a customer rang with a query we could not be certain that we had the relevant documentation and it took a long time and a lot of resource to find what we did have."

Understanding Requirements

Initially, Thompson was looking for a simple scanning and retrieval system for the London DC. However, having spoken to document management experts, IMSCAN Systems, it soon became apparent that a more efficient solution could be delivered. "Most customer query calls come into our Leicester DC and it is Viking's policy to try and deal with customers' calls at the first point of entry. To this end we knew it would be better to implement a scanning and retrieval system at each DC and network them together. IMSCAN spent a lot of time looking into our requirements and delivered a highly efficient, working solution."

Also crucial to the success of the solution was to integrate the AS400 order processing system into the IMSCAN document management system, something that only IMSCAN could do. Thompson, "As soon as a driver takes his documentation to start his deliveries, the IMSCAN system is made aware. This means that the return of this documentation is also monitored and cannot be complete until the signed delivery note is finally scanned into IMSCAN. Consequently, when a customer calls regarding an order the call handler can immediately retrieve on-screen, all the relevant paperwork for that customer. This delivers the level of customer service that is of paramount importance to our business."

Thompson is quick to stress that the system is much more advanced than was originally intended. "The people at IMSCAN took a real solutions approach to our requirements rather than simply handing over a product. They were able to examine and understand our requirements and were able to put together a system that has significantly increased our overall efficiency."

In addition to Thompson's Returns Department, the IMSCAN system is an integral application for many of Viking Direct's departments, including the tracing department, accounts and the call centres. In addition, the system is available to senior management to provide them with a clear overall view of the progress and status of orders at any given time.

The Bottom Line

Another major advantage of the IMSCAN system is its ease of use. "Delivery notes are scanned in by internal operators and the whole process of filing, indexing, retrieving, forwarding and reporting on information within the system is very straightforward. This is a key reason why IMSCAN has been accepted and used so successfully by so many departments," claims Thompson.

Looking to the future, Viking expects to make even greater strides towards improving customer service. This is likely to include the implementation of a real-time track and trace facility for its delivery service. However, Thompson can see many more opportunities for increasing the overall efficiency of the organisation by implementing the IMSCAN document management system in other areas of the company. He concludes, "IMSCAN is certainly one of the best systems on the market for delivering real and quantifiable benefits throughout an organisation. The success of the manifest documentation project and the excellent feedback that has been received throughout Viking Direct and our customers will undoubtedly drive us to look for further areas of the business that can achieve similar efficiency improvements."

"The people at IMSCAN took a real solutions approach to our requirements rather than simply handing over a product.

They were able to examine and understand our requirements and were able to put together a system that has significantly increased our overall efficiency."

Roger Thompson
Returns Manager, Viking Direct

Find Out More

Discover why some of the UK's most successful businesses are using IMSCAN to help their organizations operate more efficiently and gain a real competitive advantage.

Choose IMSCAN and help your business move ahead.

Tel: 01925 761000
Fax: 01925 766334
Web: www.imscan.net
Email: info@imscan.net

Microsoft GOLD CERTIFIED Partner | ISV/Software Solutions