

World Marketing — Output Flexibility Measured in the Millions

In high-volume document production, the scenery changes by the day, if not the hour. Every customer, every job, every device brings a different set of expectations. For World Marketing, the key to success is an infrastructure that gives total flexibility and job integrity across multiple production sites and printer platforms.

World Marketing provides integrated direct marketing and critical document solutions for Fortune 1000 companies in retail, travel, financial services, government and other industries. “Most clients are trying to get more personalized and leverage customer relationships to drive more revenue. For example, a solicitation might use purchasing data to target a message based on a customer’s last purchase,” explained World Marketing Director of Marketing, Robert McClarin.

The complex print applications, whether transactions or solicitations, involve a variety of data streams, production requirements, and finishing choices. In the past, efforts to automate workflow were hampered by engine-specific processes and impractical reprogramming workarounds. Today, World Marketing counts on Emtex VIP software for flexible print stream transformation, centralized resource management and output device independence. VIP, from Emtex, a Pitney Bowes company, is an open, industrial-strength output management solution that helps World Marketing achieve the flexibility they need by transforming any job data stream to any output device.

Of the 15 million critical first-class mail images produced monthly across the three sites, Emtex touches 11 million of those printed pages. Two types of documents dominate World Marketing output: critical mail and solicitations. Critical mail includes highly variable applications like personalized government mailings, proof of insurance letters, and statements that run from one to ten pages per set. Most have specific output requirements. Government jobs, for instance, often must be produced on recycled paper.

Any Job to Any Printer

Emtex has been strategically deployed as an industrial-strength print spooler across World Marketing production sites in Atlanta, Chicago and Dallas. Between them, these three facilities have 26 printers of various types. Emtex VIP drives high-volume continuous-form systems from IBM and Océ, as well as Xerox cut-sheet systems in Dallas. The other two sites are also moving to Emtex for their cut-sheet output.

Emtex VIP provides a single point of control for managing the equipment and applications in the three different locations. As a result, World Marketing can maximize the use of all their printing devices regardless of brand to meet customer requirements.

Total Flexibility in Scheduling and Management

Today World Marketing has total flexibility in where to print a job, and now any job can run on any printer. This freedom keeps the workflow moving and supports SLA commitments because high-volume production does not have to stop work if the designated printer is undergoing maintenance. “If an output device needs to change for whatever reason, we can move work to another system without any repercussions. If the cut-sheet printer is unavailable, the job can be moved to a continuous form device within seconds, and the work gets out on time,” declared Jeff Meyers, World Marketing National Director of Information Technology.

After a client’s letter passes through a variable data composition tool, it is copied to a directory and converted to IPDS by an Emtex AFP/PCL converter. Emtex then spools the job, and it shows up on the operator’s console. A work order specifies output requirements, so that production decisions can be made about the output location of the job. If it has to be moved from a 300 to a 600 dpi device, or from continuous form to cut sheet, VIP transforms the data on the fly, jobs don’t have to be sent back to be reprogrammed and resubmitted from the host to an alternate device.

“Printers sometimes break down or become booked, but we can still meet our client commitments because jobs can be sent to other printers without reprogramming delays,” said Meyers. “It’s a production-friendly environment that also reduces work for the programming staff in data processing.”



Greater Internal Efficiency

Increased internal efficiency is one of the most important benefits of Emtex VIP output management and real-time print stream transformation. “We don’t want to redo a program to reroute print jobs, because this would impact our efficiency, and with Emtex, this is not a concern,” Meyers said. “Now we have flexibility in how letters can be output. We don’t have to stop because of a problem; we can go around it.”

Revenue-driven clients can’t afford to have their campaigns delayed, and regulatory-driven customers must follow strict delivery schedules as well. To achieve the flexibility to send a job to any printer at each site, World Marketing requires print management software that is device-independent and improves operational efficiency. Otherwise, they would need the exact DPI, IPDS version, and model number for each designated output device. Even then, if a scheduled printer is unavailable, and the job must be sent to another, time-consuming reprogramming was usually involved, and it could take several days before the file was ready for the new printer. By then, that printer might be booked. That would send the job back to the rewrite and more delays.

With Emtex AFP/IPDS, an operator just selects the output and the job goes without requiring any modifications. This has reduced time and stress in getting jobs to print faster. “Now we save about 20 hours a month across all three sites by not having to modify applications for different output devices,” noted Meyers.

“Having the Emtex solution also helps us with RFPs by proving to clients we can meet tighter requirements,” said McClarin. Job costing is easier too, because they don’t have to create multiple scenarios for alternative printing situations.”

Emtex helps World Marketing maintain a highly secure document environment that’s critical for clients in government, insurance and financial services. The software gathers information managers can use to ensure the integrity and completeness of every production run. Accurate counts and printouts of print runs give operators an audit trail for tracking. Emtex also provides an inexpensive way to get the header and trailer pages needed for batching and keeping jobs securely grouped in order.

Work Sharing Across Multiple Sites

When volumes number in the millions, work sharing is a good strategy to spread a job over multiple sites for production and postal sorting. Emtex gives World Marketing the flexibility to easily share work across its different production sites. For example, Atlanta can transmit part of a job to Dallas or Chicago to improve sorting and get work into the mail stream faster.

Even if an application is going to multiple sites, it only has to be created once, and then can be passed to any of the three Emtex-enabled sites without modification. This wasn’t always the case. At one time, each site had its own IT department, but these were folded into the centralized DP department to better serve national accounts. Re-programming that was once handled locally was pushed to the central DP department, but that wasn’t an ideal solution either. To enable successful work sharing between three geographic locations, an intact job file must go to a printer at each site. This was nearly impossible when it had to be done remotely by a programmer.

Proofing was a major problem in remote programming. Often each site had to actually ship the programmer a proof showing variable data and document integration, creating further delay and expense. In some cases, a developer might have to travel to different facilities to program an application for each location.

Emtex VIP solved these problems by removing geographical limitations on workflow and expediting the proofing process. It brings data and letter composition together, and “With Emtex view-before-print, we can be assured the job lays out and paginates correctly,” said Meyers. “We can do visual proofing of data from the letter copy.”

Spooling Expectations Surpassed

Waiting on a job to spool creates tremendous bottlenecks, and when it happens for every job, that adds time to every production schedule. With Emtex in place, World Marketing doesn’t have to wait on spooling. “Other solutions were slower and could not spool locally,” Meyers declared. “Our expectations for spooling and RIP speed have been surpassed.”

Once a job is ready, it appears on the spooler. Files are sent in job number format, so operators can easily associate them with job tickets. Applications remain stored on the spooler using the “virtual format” retention capability of Emtex VDD, and this reduces network traffic. World Marketing has channel-driven devices, so they can go directly from spooler to printer via an Emtex channel interface card without using network bandwidth. “We don’t have to pull jobs from the network to feed the spooler, so it doesn’t slow down other users,” said Meyers.



For duplexed jobs, World Marketing uses an H-pattern printer configuration that involves passing an additional 12 feet of paper through two engines. “The additional 12 feet seems like a small problem, but trying to keep front and back pages in sync is very difficult. It took forever to fill up a buffer for page two before we could print on the extra 12 feet,” explained Meyers. “Emtex handles the printer buffering and keeps track of the prints. Without these features, we would have to purchase expensive memory for each printer and deal with clutching or breaking as the printers fight to stay in sync.”

Faster Reprints Without Respooling

One major advantage for World Marketing is the ability to quickly access job files for reprints without waiting to respool the entire job to the same printer. “It’s unacceptable to hold up a job for 30 pages to be reprinted,” McClarin said. “Until those pages are ready, the job pallet can’t move forward through warehousing and shipping. You don’t want to have to load a roll for just 30 pages. It takes a good 20 minutes to change and align a continuous form printer, while cut-sheet involves just stacking paper in a hopper.” With Emtex VIP, reprints can go to a cut-sheet device, resulting in both labor savings and fast turnaround.

After generating continuous-form output, the spool file disappears from the primary operators screen, but it is still held on the Emtex VIP server for ready access. The VIP print spooler holds copies of jobs on the spooler for 14 days, then automatically deletes them. Before, a job file would have been deleted immediately after production because disk space is at a premium. The programmer would have to push the job back to the spooler for reprints. It could be at least four hours before the operator would see the print file again, and half a day of work would be lost.

“Before Emtex VIP, we had trouble trying to rewind data, and operators would have questions about how jobs were done, and now they have no questions,” Meyers said. If they need to reprint because of poor folding quality or other problems, they get the work ticket with the appropriate page numbers and go back to the job without respooling the whole thing from the host.

What Matters Most

“Although VIP gives us greater efficiency and flexibility, we really did this for our customers, not for us,” declared McClarin. “The partnership better positions World Marketing to serve clients with best-in-class services by making our processes more capable of handling all their needs without any delays.” Future plans call for expanding Emtex capabilities at the current three sites and eventually adding Emtex VIP at their Los Angeles and Omaha facilities.

Behind the scenes, Emtex contributes to seamless workflow and faster turnaround for time-sensitive marketing campaigns. “Clients aren’t interested in the details of how we do their jobs, but they are comfortable knowing we can do them, no matter what,” he added. Emtex VIP gives World Marketing the flexibility to repurpose and transform data on the fly, so work keeps moving, and jobs are done correctly—the results that matter most to clients.

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About World Marketing, Inc. World Marketing, Inc. (WMI) is a privately held, full-service direct marketing company that offers its customers best-in-class solutions through eight locations nationwide. World Marketing has a wide menu of direct marketing services including direct response, creative, database, print, lettershop and fulfillment services. For additional information, contact World Marketing at www.worldmarkinc.com.





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