

Valley View School District Manages Short-run Printing by the Ton with EFI MarketDirect StoreFront

Eight years ago, the Printing Services Department for the Valley View School District was looking for a better way for users to submit work. The department's homegrown system, which primarily involved attaching files to emails, was not meeting the district's needs.

"We became a very early EFI MarketDirect StoreFront adopter," says Dan Strodtman, director of printing services for the school district. "While we have periodically looked at other offerings, it has remained the best solution for us."

Valley View's Printing Services Department is one of the country's highest volume EFI™ MarketDirect StoreFront users. The full-service digital print operation receives nearly all of its work through its MarketDirect StoreFront® web-to-print system, a staggering 100,000 fast-turnaround orders that account for 45 million impressions on print jobs submitted by teachers and administrators each year.

Solution

"We are unique in that we have few distributed copiers throughout our buildings," Strodtman explains. "There are only about six million copies produced annually on distributed copiers compared to the 45 million we do here. We have been able to migrate copier work to this less-expensive infrastructure largely because of the great service we are able to provide, including an average turnaround time of 24 hours or less. We could not support this volume of work without MarketDirect StoreFront."



Challenge:

"We uncover web-to-print challenges that others haven't found, but we have great access to EFI, and MarketDirect StoreFront has evolved as our needs have changed."

DAN STRODTMAN, DIRECTOR PRINTING SERVICES
VALLEY VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT





Located in the greater Chicago area, the Valley View School District consists of two high schools, five junior high schools, 12 elementary schools, an alternative high school, an early childhood center, an administrative center and transportation and maintenance facilities. The district serves the educational needs of approximately 18,000 students with more than 2,000 full-time employees.

The district's Printing Services Department has provided cost-effective, centralized document production needs since the mid-1970s. Located in the district's administrative headquarters, the department supports a wide range of printing and copying needs with a fleet of digital printers, a full bindery, and a robust online ordering system that enables delivery of most jobs within 24 hours.

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The Printing Services Department's printer fleet includes five Océ printers, a Canon imagePRESS 1110 printer and a Canon imageRUNNER ADVANCE 8285 for monochrome printing as well as a Canon imagePRESS c6010 printer for color. Both Canon imagePRESS devices include an EFI Fiery® digital front end. Ninety percent of the department's work is monochrome.

The department's employees have become experts at using MarketDirect StoreFront, but the sheer number of jobs they receive means Valley View runs into production challenges that other MarketDirect StoreFront users have yet to encounter. As a result, the Printing Services Department has built a relationship with EFI that evolved from typical service-call support to collaborative engagement. EFI software engineers and service personnel continue streamlining processes and solving the challenges Valley View faces.

Consultation with EFI also helped Valley View avoid a potentially expensive and time-consuming infrastructure concern. At one point, it became clear that the Printing Services Department's high-volume, web-to-print operation could require costly IT server upgrades. Strodtman took a second look at an EFI-hosted MarketDirect StoreFront offering that would alleviate much of Valley View's IT web-to-print burden.

Results

With the efficiencies it gets from the EFI MarketDirect StoreFront implementation, the Valley View Printing Services Department is able to process about 100,000 orders per year, ranging from an average of 500 per day to peak days when 700 or 800 orders are received. "That adds up to about 200,000 copies — or about a ton of paper — that we push out of here every day," Strodtman says. "And we are able to give most of those users 24-hour turnaround, making our services much more convenient and cost effective than if teachers and administrators were to stand in line at a copier."

A staff of six full-time and two part-time employees working one shift five days per week manages the workload.

Solution:

"I have found the EFI support staff to be highly professional and very experienced."

COLLEEN FOX, WEB SITE ADMINISTRATOR
VALLEY VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT



Colleen Fox, the department web site administrator who has primary responsibility for its web-to-print system, says, "When we receive orders, I assign them to a specific operator, a capability we worked closely with EFI in developing. The operators simply log into MarketDirect StoreFront and their jobs, in PDF format, are lined up ready for them."

On the ordering side of the process, school district employees can completely specify jobs through Valley View's MarketDirect StoreFront online interface, including the array of bindery services the department offers.

Converting MarketDirect StoreFront from on-site servers to an EFI-hosted offering "has been a tremendous advantage for us," Fox says. "Before we moved to a hosted model, we periodically had issues with running out of space on district servers, which made things pretty chaotic, considering the volume of work we need to process every day. The switch to a hosted model was fast, easy and seamless. We have not had those issues at all since we made the change, and our already overburdened IT department was also quite happy with this switch."

Results:

"Before we integrated pricing into MarketDirect StoreFront, we had lots of calls for manual quotes. Now users can see costs for themselves, and this has reduced the number of calls we get for quotes to almost zero."

DAN STRODTMAN
DIRECTOR, PRINTING SERVICES
VALLEY VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT

Valley View School District is somewhat unique in that the department does not charge for certain types of jobs. Quick copy jobs, which make up the bulk of the work, are printed at no cost to users, who pay only for full-service and color work. Recently, the Printing Services Department moved all of its pricing activity from an older MIS system to MarketDirect StoreFront, a switch that gave district personnel the ability to see quotes on paid work in real time.

"I worked closely with EFI to make sure our unique pricing implementation went well," says Fox. The Printing Services Department engaged in additional service and training support from EFI when it moved its cost information over to MarketDirect StoreFront.

Fox says the support offering has been valuable for the pricing implementation and other needs. "While I have always been happy with support," she notes, "I have noticed a significant uptick in the quality of the support in the last year-and-a-half or so, which makes me even happier."

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