

Best Practices in Digital Print

Sixth Edition Case Study

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Project: Action Systems Inc. Uses VDP to Generate Software Sales Leads

Vertical Market: Software

Business Application: Direct Marketing/Lead Generation

Action Systems Inc. wanted to find a faster, more effective way to generate leads for its Restaurant Manager software. It achieved its goals by using customized, direct-mail programs and managing mailing lists.

Program Objectives

- Expand customization and cobranding of co-op advertising program
- Improve customization so value-added resellers (VAR) names and logos could be printed in color
- Increase layout flexibility
- Reduce lead time to update and produce new direct mail pieces
- Reduce quantity of obsolete direct mail pieces
- Reduce inventory costs
- Improve printing quality and payment efficiency
- Reduce design and development and postage costs

Significant Results Reported by User

- For every dollar spent on the program, value-added resellers (VAR) are netting another \$7 in sales and profits from restaurants that buy Restaurant Manager software.
- Eliminated inventory management
- Eliminated payment collections
- Reduced design fees and postage costs

Description

Action Systems, Inc. (ASI) sells its restaurant management software products through value-added resellers (VAR). The company offers many co-op promotion programs to help VARs reach more restaurant owners and managers. For example, it allows VARs for its flagship product, Restaurant Manager, to build co-op direct mail promotions from online templates.

Previously, ASI offered VARs a program where they could add a limited amount of custom text to pre-designed direct mail materials. ASI preprinted direct mail shells and left room for custom text. However, the custom content could only be printed in black ink, which limited the flexibility of the customization. Preprinting also led to inventory costs and obsolete shells. The old system required a long lead time for updating materials and creating new direct mail pieces.

Regardless of whether ASI announced a new product feature or an entire new marketing campaign, the design agency had to create a new design file, produce new preprinted shells, and test the setup of the inkjet imprint program prior to resellers placing direct mail orders.

MSP Digital Direct Vice President Jim Young approached ASI with a proposal to give ASI's Restaurant Manager program greater appeal to VARs and the end recipients—restaurant owners and managers. MSP developed a Web-based approach that allows VARs to select one of four formats, edit the layout, add a mailing list, and produce a direct mail campaign. "Almost all the content is editable," Young said. "The only things that are protected are ASI's brand assets: its colors, fonts, and logos."

When a reseller first logs in to the system, they see how much money is available in their cooperative direct mail fund. The user can then upload an Excel file with mailing information and the system reviews the data and checks it for duplicates. CASS certification is also performed by the system.



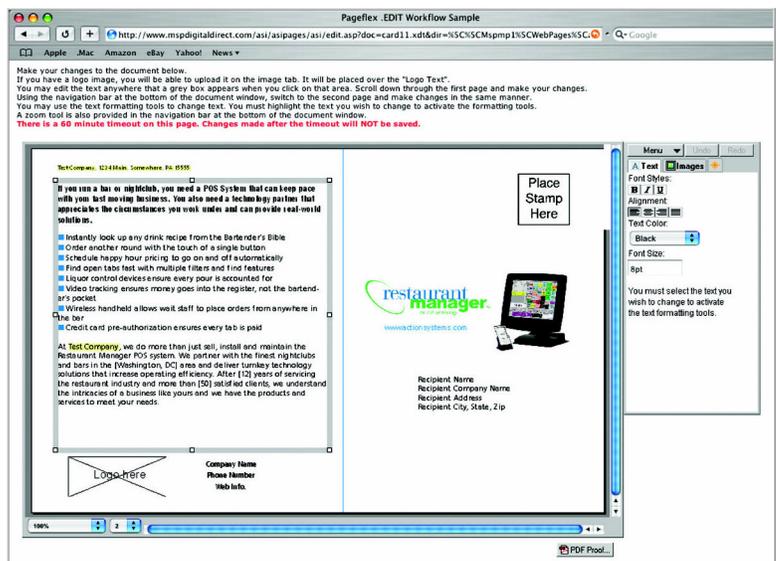
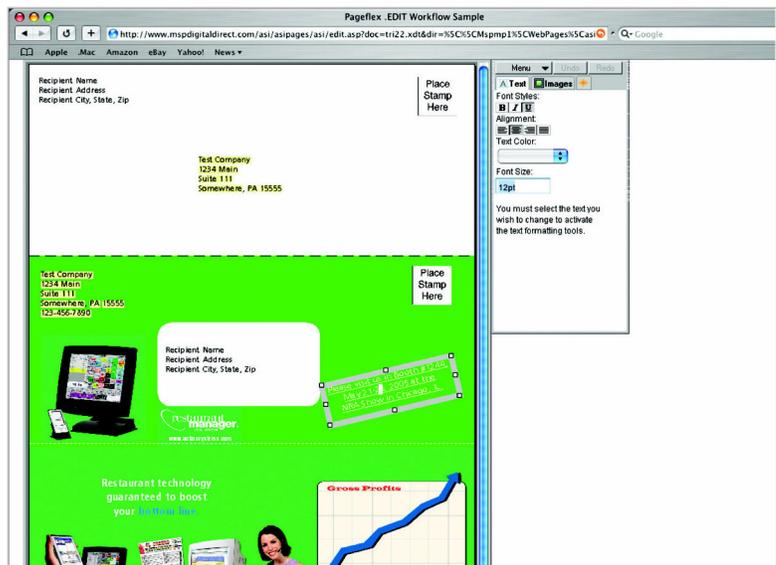
After uploading the mailing list, the reseller selects a direct mail template from four size formats and 14 different design combinations of graphics and marketing text. For instance, a reseller may select an 11 x 17 trifold with a business reply card.

The system determines the print quantity required based on the number of records in the de-duped mailing list. The reseller can also order blank samples. These documents include the customization elements and text that the reseller requested, but no addressee information. The reseller can use the blanks for handouts or address and mail them individually.

Once the order details are finalized, the user can view the selected direct mail template in their Web browser using Pageflex .EDIT technology. The reseller can highlight and then rewrite and style text (font style, size, color, and alignment) and view the changes online.

The reseller may add copy such as a reminder that they are exhibiting at an upcoming tradeshow. The marketing copy can be personalized during production with the addressee or restaurant name.

The reseller can upload their logo and place it into several areas on the document, which further supports co-branding efforts. The system helps the reseller prep their logo by providing basic image cropping and editing tools accessible through the Web page.



Client	<p>Action Systems, Inc. http://www.actionsystems.com</p> <p>ASI designs and distributes point-of-sale and management software for the food service industry and sells through value-added resellers.</p>
Print Provider	<p>MSP Digital Direct http://www.msp-pgh.com</p> <p>MSP Digital Direct is a direct mail house and digital print shop located in Freedom, PA.</p>
Hardware	HP Indigo 3000
Software	Pageflex .EDIT and Pageflex Mpower
Finishing	Offline UV coating using the K2 Systems Group Digicoater
Target Audience	Restaurant managers and owners
Distribution	Several hundred to several thousand per run
Date	First quarter 2004, ongoing