



Apollo Health and Beauty Care

Canada

Maker Of Soap And Personal Care Products Wash Their Hands Of Inefficient Paper Processes

The Client

Apollo Health and Beauty Care is the largest Private Label and Control Label Personal Care Manufacturer in Canada with formidable penetration and distribution in the North American marketplace. Apollo is a leading provider of personal care products, and remains the logical choice for customers wishing to purchase high integrity products and unique, proprietary packaging at the most competitive value.

The Challenges

As Apollo continued to grow, the company leaders soon realized the existing business systems and paper handling processes could not keep up with the increased workload. In their Finance Department they were faced with hours of time spent looking for order documentation, creating wait times to customers and backlogs in order processing. Their Sales & Product Development department was creating an IT nightmare by emailing 7-10MB artwork proofs between departments for review. Approximately 35 new designs were produced each month and shared among nearly a dozen mailboxes; often going through several revisions and subsequently more rounds of amends through the email circuit. This was quickly causing issues with email back-ups due to the large file sizes.

The Journey

Apollo initially contacted MES Hybrid Document Systems to discuss solutions for email management and archiving. However, after a quick evaluation of the internal processes it became evident that the process for distributing and reviewing the artwork proofs was the issue, not the management of their email server.

The Solution

Apollo chose the FileDirector Solution from MES Hybrid Document Systems because of its ease of use, integration with existing business systems and its ability to automate manual, paper-based, processes.

Apollo's Sales & Product Development department would produce and review approximately 35 unique artwork proofs a month and they required a system that could automate the review process, control revisions and update business leaders on the status of the review process. Their existing method included a printed checklist that was circulated by inter-office mail and large image files emailed from station to station. Each station would review the image and provide their feedback on the paper checklist before forwarding it on to the next station.

The only method available to check on the status of a specific piece of artwork was for business leaders to call each station for updates. This process had little accountability and proofs would often pile up on employees' desks if they were out of the office or too busy to review them; creating bottle-necks in production and delaying the launch of new products.

"FileDirector has helped us move towards our paperless goals. Searching and working with documents is much easier so the overall process has been sped up for our staff."

Sasha Peric, IT Administrator

The Challenges

- Integration with Apollo's existing business systems
- Automating costly and manual paper-based tasks
- Improve customer service and billing cycles with improved order visibility
- Reducing email storage requirements

The Results

- Elimination of manual paper-based processes
- 75% faster response times to clients
- Reduction in printing costs by \$12,110.00 per year
- Provided instant process status visibility



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The FileDirector Solution gave Apollo the ability to design custom electronic workflows which modeled their manual, paper-based, processes. Emails could be sent to each station as their turn in the process was due. Instead of including large image files attached to the emails FileDirector would simply direct them to the file with the document management solution via a hyperlink, drastically reducing the demand on the email servers. Once in the system, FileDirector's customizable action list directed each user on the specific items they were required to review. FileDirector also maintained a revision history of each change to the file so project managers could track all changes from beginning to end. FileDirector's "Out Of Office" feature would also allow stations to be skipped or reassigned if a specific employee was not available to review the file, preventing any delays in the product launch.

The changes implemented to the artwork approval process have reduced Apollo's time to review and approve new artwork from 36 hours to as quickly as 45 minutes; an estimated savings of \$900 per approval process.

"We wanted to consolidate our documentation in a paperless environment to assist in our green office initiatives; but more importantly so our staff could address inquires from our customers straight away as opposed to having them wait hours for a response." said Samir Shah, Apollo's Accounting Manager. With no consolidated archive for complete order documentation, members of Apollo's Finance department were forced to dig through boxes of paper records when responding to a client's request. The current practice involved printing hard copy documentation for all order files, many of which were only printed so they could be filed. Additionally this paper-based management system provided no order accuracy and completeness in reporting which required additional labour and delayed customer billing and cash flow.

After implementing FileDirector, internal use documents including Order Acknowledgements, Shipping Manifests, Bills of Lading, Pro Forma Invoices, Invoices, etc. are electronically pulled from Apollo's forms server into FileDirector; and through the use of form templates, indexed automatically. Documents that require hardcopies are now printed with a unique barcode so when scanned they can be automatically indexed and associated with the appropriate order file. The new system provides Apollo's finance staff the ability to search all documents relating to a specific customer or order. Additionally users can now verify order completeness and improve billing cycles.

The improvements in managing Apollo's finance documents has reduced their paper consumption by over 200,000 pages a year which equates to an estimated annual savings of \$12,110. Additionally, the FileDirector solution has decreased search times by over 75% which has improved customer response times and ultimately customer service.

Why FileDirector & MES Hybrid Document Systems

"The account management team from MES Hybrid Document Systems consistently took the time to understand our application and adapt the system to meet our needs." Sasha Peric, IT Administrator.

Apollo Health & Beauty Care ultimately decided on the FileDirector solution from MES Hybrid Document Systems because it provided them with the flexibility to integrate with their existing business systems and achieve their goals of a unified access point for all client documentation. Additionally, the customizable process management module allowed them to tailor a workflow that met their unique needs, eliminated countless labour hours and improved process status visibility.

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