

New Era Cap Company

INSTREAM CASE STUDY

New Era, a Derby, NY-based baseball cap manufacturer, produces more than 24 million baseball caps a year.

The Problem

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again. That philosophy is a difficult one to maintain in the world of IT, because every "mistake" represents a sizable amount of wasted money.

InStream found a gun-shy prospect in Dan Marmion, Manager of Information Services at New Era Cap Company, when they demonstrated OCR for AnyDoc and an imaging system to Marmion. They had installed an information capture system in 1993 and had been very disappointed in the results. "After several months of trying everything to get the forms processing software and scanner to communicate, we pulled the plug on the whole thing," Marmion remembers.

That experience made Marmion a tough audience for InStream's forms processing and imaging pitch three years later. Still, Marmion couldn't deny New Era was being hurt by its inefficiencies in handling information, especially in the critical area of customer service. Keeping up with 2,100 pages of sales orders that arrived daily was virtually impossible with their old system, which used manual data entry and filing. Because of the backlog in processing, and with no quick method for determining an order's status, New Era's three manufacturing plants had difficulty obtaining quick, accurate information from headquarters. Individual customers were having the same problem. "The filing, the retrieving, the faxing — it was all too slow, too cumbersome," Marmion admits.

It wasn't just unhappy users who were accumulating. The huge volumes of paper forms had to be stored, and Marmion watched as filing cabinets ate up the headquarters' open floor space — a valuable commodity at a fast-growing company. "We needed to fill that space up with something more valuable — like people," he recalls.



**Processing of 2,100
pages of sales orders
daily**



**Significant reduction
in labor costs**



**Shortened turnaround
times and improved
customer service**

> continued

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-Dan Marmion, Manager of Information Services ,
New Era Cap Company

The Solution

Enter InStream, touting the advantages of an InStream imaging system that scanned in using OCR for AnyDoc. Marmion was very impressed with InStream's presentation, particularly a reference to a hospital in Ohio that turned freed up filing space into an X-ray room after installing OCR for AnyDoc software. “That hospital reference really caught my eye,” Marmion admits. Marmion was also impressed with OCR for AnyDoc's user-friendly design and the fact that the software processed New Era's own sales orders with ease during the presentation. From the beginning, the plan was to take OCR for AnyDoc beyond the order processing application into expediting inventory management and payroll, but order processing was the first stop on the journey. “The application was simpler and I knew it would have a quicker payback,” Marmion explains.

In this new automated system, New Era staffers batch sales orders, checking for torn or skewed pages. The pages are then fed into a Kodak 3500 scanner at headquarters. OCR for AnyDoc automatically retrieves scanned characters and places them into an electronic, on-screen version of New Era's form. The software flags any form with missing fields or information requiring verification, such as incomplete fields, numbers printed in the wrong place or illegible hand-print. Staff at verification stations manually review any suspect forms, make corrections, and then, at day's end, forward all information to New Era's database. After that, sales order information can be called up on a computer in seconds.

There is a full OCR for AnyDoc, processing/server station, two scanning stations and three verification stations at headquarters. The forms processing software works with a Kodak 3500 scanner to feed the imaging system. In addition, each of the production centers uses one OCR for AnyDoc scanning/verification station and two Canon DR 3020 scanners.

The Results

The benefits quickly became obvious. A four-person filing team was quickly reduced to one full-time and one part-time person. Filing just one document used to take hours, even days, during peak times. “Today,” says Marmion, “it takes only one day to process an entire day of paperwork.”

Most of the filing cabinets are gone. The space is now utilized as a conference room, two offices and a display of the company's products.

Most importantly though, customer service has been significantly improved. Marmion calls the time involved in installing and getting up to speed on the total system “six weeks that revolutionized our customer service.”



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