Pressero
Empowering Web-to-Print

Santa Finds Unexpected Help from Pressero and SantaSentMeALetter.com

Company Background

In 2006, entrepreneurs New Jersey Kelly Easterling and Preston Hunt were feeling in the Christmas spirit when they decided to start a business aimed at helping Santa communicate personally with children (and some adults!). SantaSentMeALetter.com was launched to a couple hundred "friends and family" in its first year to test the idea; now in its sixth year, the company sends thousands of personalized letters from Santa each holiday season.

Challenge

As volumes continued to grow, Easterling, General Partner and Santa Mail Specialist, began looking for a more automated way to manage and process the growing number of orders the firm was receiving. "With the growth in volume, our manual processes were no longer sufficient to handle the workload," Easterling said. "In addition, when customers called with questions, it could be time-consuming to find their specific order to address those questions. We needed to streamline the entire process, both for our sanity and to provide the type of personalized customer service our customers expect—and that we expect of ourselves."

Solution

SantaSentMeALetter.com chose Pressero from Aleyant Systems, an easy-to-use, cloud-based B2B and B2C storefront solution that streamlines order entry, production and management. Pressero includes the powerful eDocBuilder variable data publishing system. Using eDocBuilder, users can quickly and easily customize, proof, and approve their "Santa" letters directly from a web browser. eDocBuilder templates are core to the SantaSentMeALetter.com application.

Results

"In 2011, we sent about 5,000 letters," Easterling recalls. "There is no way we would have been able to handle that volume during the peak holiday season without Pressero. While 2012 numbers are not in yet, and were impacted by Hurricane Sandy in the early part of the season, we believe the volume will continue to grow, and we are pleased with the ongoing improvements Aleyant Systems continues to make to the storefront and the back-end systems."

Now in its sixth season, SantaSentMeALetter.com has delivered the magic of Christmas to children (and adults, too) throughout the United States, Canada and beyond. Its letters from Santa are among the highest quality available; complete with a personal message from Santa, custom

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North Pole postmark, and Santa's own wax seal. In 2011, a "Santa Key" option was added for homes that don't have chimneys. Easterling explains, "These are absolutely gorgeous, custom-made keys that are 3.5 inches tall. They make a beautiful Christmas tree ornament, but their primary use is for children to put them outside on the doorstep so that Santa can enter the house in case there is no chimney. This magical key only works for Santa!"

SantaSentMeALetter offers four different packages, and within each package are a growing number of editable templates that buyers can customize and preview online to make sure the letters are as personal as possible. All of the text is editable, and templates include such information as the city in which the child resides; names of teachers, pets, friends or relatives; recent activities the child has been involved in and more. Each letter is personally signed by "Santa" and carries Santa's wax seal as well as the North Pole postmark. One package even includes a Nice List ID card.

"With the Pressero storefront," Easterling explains, "we are able to efficiently manage all of the orders as they come in. We preview orders for errors and

can quickly locate an order if a customer calls wanting a change, asking for status, or needing help placing the order online. Keep in mind that there are literally hundreds of thousands of unpaid orders that come in. These could be shopping cart abandonment, customers having a problem with creating their letters or looking for additional information to complete them, folks who can't log in or don't have access to their original email address, or simply people that do not feel comfortable submitting credit card information online and would prefer to do so by phone."

The firm is also using Pressero's MailChimp integration which can export users from a site into MailChimp. Pressero includes a few dates with each user… when the user account was created, when the user last logged in, and when the user last ordered. "We use this integration to create email lists," Easterling says, "and then to create a user list of all the users that have order this season. That allows us to create campaigns with multiple mailings yet not continue to send marketing emails to customers who have already ordered."

New to the system in 2012 is a robust search feature that allows the Santa team to almost instantly find a particular order, regardless of its

state. Easterling adds, "We spoke with the Aleyant team about enhancing their existing search function, and we literally had a party in the office when the new capabilities came through. It makes a huge difference in our ability to handle this workload which is all crunched into a few weeks. Clearly, we have a deadline. Letters from Santa can't be late!"

Easterling reports that a number of other improvements have been made to both the user interface and the back-end system, including a more user-specific screen that makes it easier to talk users through issues they may be having, and an easier-to-use menu structure on the back end. As demonstrated by the addition of the magic Santa Key, Pressero is able to manage inventories of both printed and non-printed items.

"Our style is not just to sell a product," Easterling says. "We want a customized product that continues our tradition of offering a magical way to start the holiday season, and Pressero allows us to uphold that tradition in a big way. For the future, we are looking into how we might be able to add video to the mix, and we know that Aleyant will be there to support us as these types of new requirements emerge."