SmartPath, Inc.

Pharmaceutical company speeds review and approval of marketing documents for new treatments and enhances employee collaboration with Adobe® Acrobat® and Adobe PDF

Company Profile

Corporate marketing departments are awash in information. Product plans, collateral design drafts, project schedules, and other materials support everyday marketing functions. The information resides in many file formats, including Microsoft® Word, Microsoft Excel, and Adobe InDesign,® and is often stored only on the desktop of the document's author. Recognizing the problems associated with having too much information on too many desktops and no electronic way to manage materials, SmartPath, Inc. developed a suite of tools that organize, track, and manage essential marketing activities. The company's Marketing Resource Management (MRM) applications serve businesses worldwide, including leading creative firms, pharmaceutical companies, and manufacturers.

Challenges Faced

Collect and track information

In marketing, most initiatives require team input. Product marketing plans are reviewed extensively, and strategic activities such as developing product messaging, arranging media tours, and creating marketing collateral can involve many people, who are often at geographically dispersed locations. Traditionally, companies coordinated and tracked these processes through phone calls, in-person meetings, and on paper. The advent of e-mail streamlined information distribution, but it didn't address problems with document security, document and project tracking, or the need for costly specialized applications to view certain files.

Speed up review and approval processes

Employees in marketing and product development and staff from outside creative firms collaborate to develop materials with the right messaging and the right look. Creating a single ad or brochure frequently involves dozens of reviewers commenting on multiple rounds of drafts, a process still managed largely on paper. As a result, tracking draft versions is difficult, as is deciphering handwritten comments. Additional problems result from the delays of distributing paper documents and then waiting for everyone to mail or fax back input.
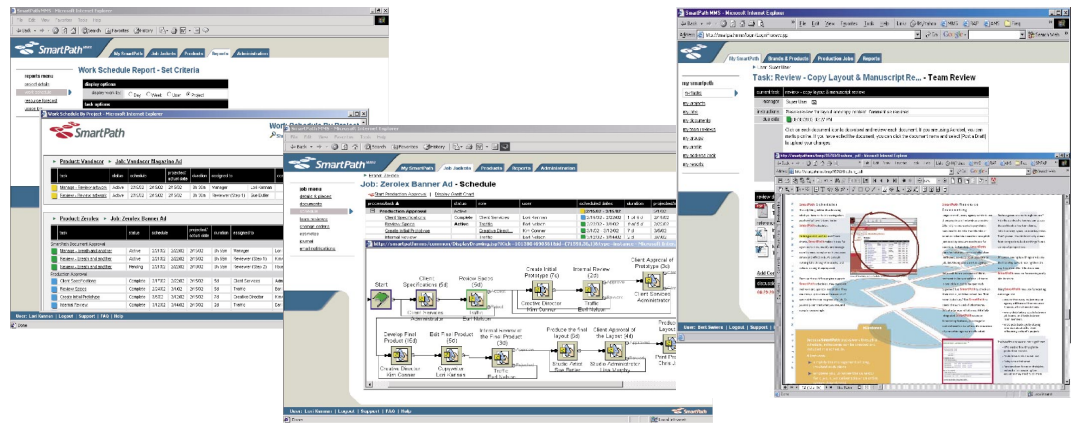
"Simply getting drafts of documents to people can be a hassle. It's difficult to track pages to make sure they arrived, and sending native application files can create problems with document security and integrity," explains Brent Dessenberger, vice president of strategic relationships at SmartPath. Other problems arise when staff tries to deal with input in different formats—on paper, phone messages, electronic documents—and correctly integrate all this information into final documents.

Success Strategy

When one of the world's leading pharmaceutical companies wanted to more efficiently develop marketing strategies to increase awareness of new treatments or market approved

drugs to treat different conditions, they turned to SmartPath Marketing Management Software (MMS), which utilizes Adobe Acrobat software for streamlined material review and distribution.

Documents previously stored in various locations and file formats are now converted to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files that retain the exact look of the originals. The Adobe PDF files, which include strategic plans, project schedules, budgets, brochure designs, and other materials, are placed in the SmartPath MMS repository residing on a Windows® 2000 server. More than 350 employees and outside consultants access the documents via a secure extranet. Staff can review documents using Acrobat commenting tools to electronically mark up documents and track a document throughout the review cycle. Members of a project team can access materials at any time, individually or as part of a group using Acrobat support for WebDAV for real-time electronic collaboration.

When documents are finalized, staff use Adobe PDF forms in the SmartPath repository to enter and save information on print specifications and printing deadlines. Printers can log onto the SmartPath system to access final collateral pieces in Adobe PDF and the accompanying printing guidelines on Adobe PDF forms. Printers also use the Adobe PDF forms to electronically update their contact information, and revise delivery schedules or total costs; the SmartPath system instantly saves the updated information.

Benefits

- Stricter adherence to budgets and schedules for document creation
- Reduced administration costs by as much as 30 percent annually
- Decreased the time required for review and approval of marketing collateral

SmartPath MMS with Adobe Acrobat allows executives at the pharmaceutical company and outside cre-ative professionals to successfully track programs and collateral development against time and budgets. Marketing team members have insight as to who is reviewing materials, what comments are received, and what additional steps are needed to approve projects. Staff can see instantly if a project is falling behind schedule and if funds from other programs should be reallocated to account for overruns.

"Adobe Acrobat and SmartPath software marry marketing documents with business processes," says Dessenberger. "For one of our pharmaceutical customers, this integrated, enterprise workflow lowers administrative costs by more than one million dollars annually."

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