



CASE STUDY

J&B Group Reduces Expenses and Improves Productivity

Cuts More than \$200k Annually

"Using the joint RightFax and Document Centre solution, we're achieving all of our objectives—and then some." — Kurt Anderson, J&B Group

BACKGROUND

J&B Group (www.jbgroup.com), based in St. Michael, Minn., procures and distributes a large range of perishable food items. Since its start in 1979 with "two guys and a truck" delivering goods to local stores, the organization has grown to an enterprise of 360 professionals producing, storing, marketing and transporting meat and deli products to customers across the Midwest. The company services thousands of clients, including meat markets, independent and chain grocers, warehouses and food services distributors.

Overall, J&B Group works to be more than a just a link in the supply chain, but an organization adding value in every connection. It strives to do this by following its company mission and objectives dubbed "The J&B Way." Utmost within this pledge is respect, commitment and fairness to its customers and employees—all of which lead to mutually beneficial long-term relationships.

THE CHALLENGE

As a growing company, J&B Group continually installed fax machines, printers and copiers as tools to maintain customer service; however—with strength in numbers—the machines soon "took over."

"There were printers, copiers and fax machines every few feet," Kurt Anderson, vice president of Information Technology for J&B Group, said. Among the crowd: three to four printers in every office space (35 laser printers in all) with 20 fax machines and several copiers scattered throughout the workplace.

"The set-up was not conducive to a company in our size of environment," Anderson said.

Diminishing Profits

Monetary costs associated with managing the infrastructure soared. Anderson estimated J&B Group was spending close to \$80,000 per year on laser printing expenses alone (at .04 cents per impression and .004 cents per paper sheet for 1.8 million pages annually). The surprising total does not include the estimated \$40,000 per year maintenance costs for the printers, copiers and fax machines. "Maintenance costs were killing us, especially on laser printers," Anderson lamented. "We had an inventory of multiple printer ribbons and laser cartridges—items that are not cheap—for six or seven different models of Hewlett-Packard, Lexmark and other printers."

In addition, J&B Group found it was footing a hefty amount for other fax costs. It managed a \$700 bill per month just for the fax phone lines and, with 90 percent of J&B Group's customers miles away, the tally of long distance transmissions also added up quickly.

Inefficient Processes

While Anderson described the expense of hardware and phone service, he also pointed to excessive time costs associated with managing all the machines. "With so many stations to maintain," he shared, "just traveling from machine to machine to keep them operative took the IT staff away from other business-critical tasks."

Other employees faced the same productivity challenges. For instance, it often became a virtual expedition just to fax a document. Anderson illustrated: "Several times a day employees would print a document from their PC, walk to the printer to pick it up, walk to the fax machine, type in the fax number, wait for successful transmission and—when it was all done—throw the paper in the shredder."

Incoming faxes were met with similar management challenges. With the high volume of incoming faxes, some transmissions—especially those with improper addressing—would get lost in the shuffle as employees searched through the papers to find an urgent message or needed information. Since staff members were already busy with other tasks, no one had the responsibility to distribute faxes. "That was the problem," Anderson laughed. "It was every man for himself."

J&B Group employees needed an effective way to manage its high volume of pricing and sales sheets, invoices and other communication to suppliers and customers.

THE SOLUTION

J&B Group searched for solutions that answered specific technology objectives, including consolidation, cost reduction and productivity enhancement in a virtually paperless office.

The food distributor turned to two industry leaders who were the first to bring their respective solutions to the market: Captaris RightFax for local area network fax and Xerox for multi-function machines. Both companies, partners for seven years, offer solutions aimed at simplifying business processes, reducing cost and increasing productivity.

By enabling employees to manage communication from a centralized and integrated system—including fax capabilities directly from the desktop—J&B Group has realized substantial time and cost savings of more than \$200,000 per year. The overall solution offers tools to ease administration and maintenance. Anderson remarked, "Just the total trouble-call volume to the IT department on captures—copying, printing and faxing—have been reduced by close to 80 percent since we implemented the solutions."

He continued, "Using the joint RightFax and Document Centre solution, we're achieving all of our objectives—and then some."

Estimated Annual Savings

- Overall: More than \$200k including:
- Fax: \$75k
- Digital Copy: \$54k

Consolidation

"Instead of four printers in every office space, we now have the same number of 'Media Centers' strategically situated within the company. These are the one-stop locations employees use to handle copies, print-outs and hard copy faxing," Anderson said.

The hubs are created with the Xerox Document Centre family of products, including Document Centres 416, 425, 432, 470 and 555. Each of the networked multifunction, multi-tasking machines enables printing, scanning, emailing, copying and faxing.

Employees no longer tour the office every time they need to scan a document, pick up a print, make a copy or send a fax. Among the many capabilities of Document Centre, Anderson said employees "enjoy being able to take a hard copy to the machine and scan it into their Microsoft Outlook Inbox to fax, email or simply store on their personal hard drive." In fact, Anderson happened to be walking by a center when the purchasing manager was doing just that.

Anderson laughed, "He looked at me and said, 'Wow! These machines are incredible!' He couldn't believe all the tasks one machine is capable of doing."

At J&B Group, this consolidation and other capabilities result from the tight integration between Captaris and Xerox. Together, the products create walk-up access and a single, central point of control for hard copy and electronic faxing. Document Centre offers the one-stop, walk-up location for hard copies and since RightFax is a desktop faxing tool, users can easily send and receive faxes directly from the Document Centre or from their desktop. Incoming faxes received at the RightFax server can also be received at the Document Centre in the normal queue as an incoming print job to be printed or routed electronically for distribution and retrieval.

Cost Reduction

The annual savings J&B Group attains using RightFax and Document Centre are deserving of numerous celebratory steak dinners. "We knew we would save money but the savings have been larger than we predicted," Anderson said. Using Document Centre, he estimates digital copier annual savings of \$54,000, based on a weighted average of two cents per copy. "And that's just hard costs," he adds. "It has nothing to do with all the other features and functionality we've gained."

By assigning personal network fax numbers to its 135 RightFax users, J&B Group has also been able to dispose of the fax machines scattered throughout the office, avoiding additional use as well as replacement costs. Furthermore, users leverage features such as least cost routing for savings on a per fax basis. Having used the RightFax system for almost two years, Anderson calculates fax savings to be well over \$75,000.

Long distance savings are obtained via use of Document Centre as well since users can scan and email documents to customers. However, much of the cost reduction realized with RightFax and Document Centre has been in productivity enhancements. "The soft numbers are probably double what we saw in hard cost savings," Anderson said.

Productivity Enhancements

Using RightFax Business Server, J&B Group employees send and receive faxes directly from the desktop, email or other business applications. Invoices, sales sheets and other documents in a variety of applications can be slated for fax delivery right at the desk via an easy-to-use network interface. Retrieval via RightFax desktop faxing has also increased productivity: users no longer need to leave their desks to sift through and take faxes piled up on numerous machines throughout the office and important documents are not misrouted.

"Desktop faxing is very helpful because we have a busy sales staff," Anderson said. "One salesman said he saves at least an hour per day compared to the manual faxing he used to do." Instead of the old, time-intensive routine of picking up prints and faxing at a standalone machine, the salesman is able to complete the tasks at his desk. This productivity gain is increased as he can also send a fax to multiple recipients simultaneously, via Microsoft Outlook groups, as opposed to running the same document through a fax machine over and over.

Since RightFax integrates with Microsoft Outlook and other email solutions, incoming faxes—marked by a fax icon—are listed along with emails. This makes it easier for users to store and find faxes as needed.

Time savings are also appreciated by the IT team tasked with maintaining the RightFax and Document Centre solutions. Using central network administration and media centers, the team now has central repositories to manage computing and hardware needs.

Productivity Improvements

- Reduced captures trouble-call volume by 80 percent
- Salesperson reports saving at least one hour per day to complete network faxing (compared to manual efforts)

Also, the reduction of its trouble-call volume by 80 percent has allowed IT employees and others to be more strategic in completing their daily responsibilities and planning for the long-term.

RESULTS

With the substantial consolidation and savings J&B Group has realized, employees have been able to focus their time on other business-critical tasks such as strategic planning or customer-focused projects, according to Anderson.

Communication with customers is affected by the timeliness and professionalism of faxes sent via the joint RightFax and Document Centre solution. By faxing directly from the desktop, recipients receive a much cleaner fax along with an automatic personal cover letter from the J&B Group staff member. "Our customers realize we're a technology driven company—a competitive edge in this day and age," Anderson commented.

J&B Group has a tradition of commitment to its customers, employees and company strength. With improved customer relations, employee morale and company bottom line, Anderson concluded, "We feel the RightFax and Document Centre solutions augment that commitment remarkably."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Captaris Business Information Delivery solutions help organizations of all sizes automate the information and document flow throughout the information lifecycle (capture, process, archive, deliver). With a comprehensive suite of software and services, Captaris helps organizations to grow revenues and increase profits while meeting compliance goals. Through a global distribution network of leading enterprise technology partners, Captaris has installed more than 90,000 systems in 95 countries in companies of all sizes, including the entire Fortune 100. For more information, visit www.captaris.com or call 1.800.443.0806.

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