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Polaroid Corporation

The experts on “instant imaging” improve service and save thousands in printing and distribution costs by publishing documents as Adobe PDF files on CD and the Web

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

- Worldwide leader in instant imaging
- Annual sales approximately \$2 billion
- Employees: 8,000
- Headquarters: Cambridge, Massachusetts

BENEFITS SUMMARY

- A CD containing Adobe PDF files costs \$1 to produce, compared with \$2,000 for a complete set of paper documents.
- Yearly printing budget has been reduced from \$30,000 to about \$3,000.
- By publishing Adobe PDF files on the Web, Polaroid reduces call center volume and expenses by about \$4 per phone call and \$20 per manual shipped.
- With Adobe Acrobat Capture, Polaroid brings old paper documents online as fully searchable Adobe PDF files.
- The Image Import feature in Acrobat 4.0 enables Polaroid to create a file of product photos quickly.
- Adobe PDF files can be used on both CD and the Web, cutting costs and production time.

www.polaroid.com

Leave it to the leader in instant imaging to recognize the business benefits of instant publishing. During the 1990s, Polaroid Corporation faced a challenge related to economically distributing product documentation to its new service organizations in worldwide subsidiaries. “As new offices opened, we’d receive e-mails asking us to send one of every document,” says Yale Cohen, senior communications manager. “Each location needed 100 documents costing about \$20 each to print, for about \$2,000 per office. When you multiply that by dozens of locations, we were looking at paper printing and shipping costs over several years in excess of \$100,000.”

To cut costs and improve employee and customer convenience, Polaroid began using Adobe Acrobat and Acrobat Capture software to publish its user guides electronically—on the Web and on CD—as Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. The Polaroid Electronic Library, a CD that contains about 6,000 internal documents, or 16,000 pages, includes a complete set of product sheets, service bulletins, user guides, and training materials. Its Web site, www.polaroid.com, provides documents such as product manuals to customers. “By delivering documents as Adobe PDF files,

we can produce a CD for about \$1—and publish to the Web at no additional cost—compared to \$2,000 for a printed documentation set,” says Cohen.

MORE USABLE DOCUMENTS

Acrobat and Adobe PDF provide both the economical and convenience benefits that Polaroid needed: the files look and print just like the original from any computer; navigational tools, such as bookmarks for the table of contents entries, are generated automatically from documents converted to Adobe PDF from Adobe PageMaker® and Microsoft Word; and the company added other bookmarks that link related files such as a repair manual to a parts list or a product sheet to a QuickTime™ VR movie. Using Acrobat Catalog, the company built an index for all the documents on the CD, which lets users search by keyword, product, application, or document type.

OLD PAPER REBORN IN ADOBE PDF

The Polaroid Electronic Library and Web site even include Adobe PDF files of old paper documents, for which the original electronic files no longer exist. The company simply scans the paper documents and uses

Adobe Acrobat Capture software to convert them to Adobe PDF. The resulting Adobe PDF files are fully searchable, look just like the original paper documents, and can be further enhanced with navigational tools such as bookmarks and hypertext links. “Acrobat Capture improves customer service by letting us continue to support discontinued products, at essentially no cost,” says Cohen.

FASTER DOCUMENT CREATION

Polaroid also uses Acrobat 4.0 software to save time creating Adobe PDF files of product photographs that can be reused in other documents. In the past, Cohen created these files by placing all the images in a single directory, imported them to a page-layout program, and then converted the file to Adobe PDF. Now Cohen uses the Image Import feature in Acrobat 4.0 to create an Adobe PDF file directly, by passing the authoring program. “Building the page in Acrobat 4.0 takes about half a day, compared to two weeks to resolve all the publishing issues with an authoring program,” says Cohen. “That’s a time reduction of 10:1!”

For manuals that are generally created by contract writers and delivered in Adobe PDF, Polaroid takes advantage of the late-stage editing capabilities of Acrobat 4.0 to edit images, add text, move images on the page, and even modify formatting.

FAST WEB SITE CREATION

After creating the Adobe PDF files for the CD, Polaroid created an intranet site and upgraded the Customer Support Web site in only six weeks. “We already had the files in a Web-ready format; all we needed was to build the HTML pages,” says Cohen. The site is wildly successful: Customers who find information on the Web don’t need to



The Polaroid Electronic Library CD and the Polaroid Customer Support page at www.polaroid.com provide staff and customers with fully searchable access to an Adobe PDF library of product information. Publishing product materials in Adobe PDF reduces costs, document production time, and customer call center volume while providing efficient access to product information.



call Polaroid’s call center, and Adobe PDF files consistently rank among the site’s most frequently downloaded files.

“Each phone call not made saves about \$4, and each manual not printed and shipped saves another \$20,” says Cohen. “One user guide has been downloaded 4,000 times. Even if only one-quarter of those people would have requested the document through our call center, we saved \$20,000.” When customers do call, the rep can immediately e-mail the Adobe PDF file as an attachment, or print and fax it.

“The ease of publishing Adobe PDF files on the Web positions Polaroid to respond to a new breed of customers—those who purchase our consumer digital cameras and expect complete information on our Web site.”

LESS TIME, LESS MONEY, MORE SERVICE

“Adobe Acrobat is ideal because converting documents to Adobe PDF files takes only seconds, and then the file can be repurposed

for delivery via the Web and CD-ROM,” says Cohen. “My printing budget used to be about \$30,000 a year. Now I spend less than \$3,000 on printing, and employees and customers can quickly find the information they need, where and when they need it.”

TOOL KIT

Software

Adobe Acrobat
 Adobe Acrobat Capture
 Adobe PageMaker
 Adobe Illustrator®
 Adobe Photoshop®

Hardware

PCs running Microsoft® Windows®
 Apple Power Macintosh computers
 Polaroid SprintScan 35mm and transparency scanners
 HP flatbed scanners

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