

Seagull Software Empowers Carlson Craft to Smooth Out the Wrinkles in Their Customer Service Operation



As a part of Taylor Corporation, Carlson Craft is America's leading wholesale printing company. Founded in 1948, they specialize in personalized social and commercial stationery.

As a wholesaler, they market their products through a nationwide network of dealers. Carlson Craft currently employs over 2,200 people and is recognized as the top producer of personalized wedding invitations in the U.S.

Challenge

When customer service departments don't run smoothly, the consequences—inefficiencies, high employee turnover, inaccuracies and long wait times for customers—can threaten customer relationships and potentially lead to the loss of business.

Carlson Craft, a printer of personalized paper products such as wedding invitations, greeting cards and stationery, wanted to enhance their customer service system to improve workflows, reduce training times and achieve customer satisfaction. Based in an iSeries platform, Carlson Craft's customer service application consisted of multiple green screens that were challenging for service representatives to learn and navigate through quickly.

"Since we have a large product line, our customer service system is pretty complex. It took a lot of training time, so we wanted to revamp the system to make it as easy as possible to learn and use," said Rich Rotchadl, Vice President of IT for Carlson Craft. Carlson Craft decided to look for a solution that would allow them to extend their legacy system to a Microsoft Windows environment to offer customer service representatives with a more user-friendly interface.

Solution

Carlson Craft selected Seagull Software's LegaSuite GUI® solution, a component of LegaSuite®, to transform their green screens into a simple, easy-to-navigate graphical user interface (GUI). LegaSuite GUI provides industry-leading developer tools and infrastructure software for Web-to-host and Windows-to-host access to iSeries applications. The solution delivers the capability to deploy iSeries applications to Java, Windows and HTML environments in a single work effort.

With LegaSuite GUI, Carlson Craft was able to migrate to PCs and launch their customer service system in a Windows environment, providing their 125 service representatives with an intuitive, graphical interface. "People that we were employing—especially the college-aged students—were used to PCs and a GUI interface, and they wanted that kind of environment," said Rotchadl. Using LegaSuite GUI, Carlson Craft was able to capitalize on their existing business logic, while delivering faster service to their customers. According to Rotchadl, the enhanced application has yielded more efficient calls with customers. "The migration to PCs and the introduction of LegaSuite GUI has certainly reduced the call times," he said.



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The flexibility of LegaSuite GUI has permitted Carlson Craft to add new money- and time-saving functionality that would have been impossible with their previous system. “The original business driver was to cut down on training time. That has been accomplished by employing the graphical user interface. Beyond that some more robust functional enhancements were built into the interface,” said Rotchadl. Carlson Craft receives orders by fax and by mail. To reduce the paper trail associated with orders, they implemented their own fax and scanning programs to electronically capture all incoming documents. Then through LegaSuite GUI, they launch the image of the orders, which can be viewed on PCs. “The ability to pull up the images has helped us cut down on paper and time-consuming trips to the fax machines and file cabinets,” said Rotchadl.

Carlson Craft selected Seagull Software’s LegaSuite GUI technology because of its flexibility. “We felt that LegaSuite GUI was the best of breed. It had the functionality we needed and it gave us the flexibility of scripting. We could add a lot to the system to meet our unique needs. That was a big part of our decision,” commented Rotchadl.

Results

By deploying LegaSuite GUI, Carlson Craft has been able to improve relationships with not only their customers, but their own employees as well. “The reaction from customer service reps who were previously using the green screens has been positive,” said Rotchadl. “LegaSuite GUI has been extremely well-received by the customer service people and they are a lot happier. They won’t go back to green screens. In fact they probably can’t. The green screens look too unintelligible to them.”

In addition, the IS department is experiencing increased efficiencies with LegaSuite GUI, since the GUI screens are easier to lay out than the green screens. “We still program the green screen apps and we put the GUI on top, but it has changed our programming in a sense. Now we don’t have to worry about adding labels or arranging the green screens. We are able to minimize the time spent organizing the screens, while the GUI presents a nice, uniform look for us,” said Rotchadl.

With LegaSuite GUI, Carlson Craft has revolutionized their customer service system, experiencing the benefits of a Windows GUI without re-engineering their existing legacy application. “Seagull Software as a vendor has been very good. It was a very smooth implementation. It was up and running quickly and we were able to change our screens easily. The whole experience of purchasing, implementation, training—all of it went very smoothly. It was a good experience for us,” said Rotchadl.

Rocket | **Seagull**

Rocket Seagull

3340 Peachtree Road, N.E.

Suite 800

Atlanta, GA 30326

UNITED STATES

Tel: +1 404 760 1560

Fax: +1 404 760 0061

E-mail: info@seagullsoftware.com

Web: rocketsoftware.com/seagull

