

Gage Marketing Services Keeps America Rolling Along

Case Summary - Marketing fulfillment company uses Xerox DocuCards and Xerox monochrome and color digital printers to manage extended warranty programs for America's carmakers.

Once a new car is purchased and leaves the automobile dealership, a number of processes begin that set up the car and owner in databases, initiating maintenance and warranty records that will follow the car throughout its useful life. Gage Marketing Services

(www.gagem.com) is one of the companies in this critical chain of after-the-sale automotive care. What Gage Marketing Services Automotive Division does is receive, process and send several thousand extended warranty packages to new car owners every week.

"We like the quality and the reliability of the Xerox papers; we have less jamming so we prefer to use Xerox papers whenever possible."

required to keep America's cars rolling.

Gage Marketing, with headquarters located on the outskirts of Detroit,



Gage Marketing Services' headquarters in Romulus, a suburb of Detroit, Michigan.

specializes in integrated marketing service solutions that help their clients reach target audiences with specific messages to achieve higher sales. Their areas of specialty range from retail merchandising to fulfillment and logistics services for consumer and business-to-business communication mailings, with a natural geographical emphasis on service to the automotive industry.

Just-In-Time Print Marketing

Gage has taken a lesson from the industrial playbook and applied the "just-in-time" axiom of the manufacturing industry successfully throughout their marketing services operations. One of the key places this philosophy proves itself is in on-demand printing for fulfillment projects. Gage now prints and finishes literature when it is ordered, whether by a dealer or

customer, so excess materials are not preprinted and warehoused, then declared obsolete when content needs to be updated. This process allows them to save in a number of ways: elimination of print overruns, less pick and pack warehousing, less wasted labor and less expense for their clients in the long run.

Gage continually works to stay ahead of the latest waves of technology

affecting all aspects of marketing communications and fulfillment so that their customers reap the benefits of technological advances and maintain their competitive edge. Gage has worked with Xerox as a technology partner for the past decade, depending on Xerox monochrome and color digital printers, papers and supplies for all digital printing projects. Gage prints about eight million pages plus a million and a half extended service warranty cards each year on their Xerox DocuColor 2060 digital color press, Xerox DocuPrint 96 Laser Printing System and Xerox DocuTech 6180 Production Publishers.

Extended Warranty Programs Driven by Xerox DocuCards

One area of technical expertise that goes hand in hand with a large fulfillment operation is working with variable data. About 70 percent of Gage's projects include variable data and variable graphics for custom processing, personalized printing and fulfillment. "In addition to the extended

service warranties for two of the major domestic automobile manufacturers, we also process a large number of rebate checks to support on-going dealer and consumer purchase incentive programs," commented Sandra Brownell, digital print-on-demand manager at Gage Marketing Services. Gage must



Examples of the automotive extended warranty programs that Gage manages using the Xerox DocuCard two-component (card and paper) stock.

constantly remain vigilant and protective of their productivity, particularly when their daily work includes a high percentage of variable data streams. One way they do that is to encourage their customers to use Xerox papers whenever possible.

Xerox is the only equipment manufacturing company that also engineers the development of the papers to run in their digital printers, copiers and sheet-fed or roll-fed presses. The

papers are digitally optimized to assure the best performance in the Xerox digital printing equipment. Sandra elaborated, “We will only use Xerox papers on the DocuColor 2060 since those are what is approved. And we have always used the Xerox DocuCards because they just run so much better. If a card isn’t of good quality and made to exacting specifications, you are going to be in trouble and it just isn’t worth it.”

The Xerox DocuCards are a two-component specialty media product. The seven mil card has a specially designed coating which ensures that color or monochrome toner adheres to the card permanently; the card is affixed to an



The Xerox DocuTech 6180 Production Publisher and inline booklet maker at Gage Marketing Services

8 ½ by 11-inch carrier sheet, both of which can be color printed. The durable card is designed to be separated from the carrier sheet by the recipient and then used as an identification card, in this instance, when requesting extended warranty services at their local dealership. Gage Marketing uses the standard 1-up configuration of the DocuCard while custom configurations – with multiple cards per carrier sheet or a

custom-positioned single card – are available by contacting Xerox directly. Custom media products, such as the configurable DocuCards, open up the world of Xerox digitally optimized papers to customers with specialized paper and media requirements.

Gage finds that it’s often a delicate balance to accommodate the paper stocks that their customers want to use and keep the machines running at top performance. “We’re challenged by the varieties of print stocks that we need to use, particularly if it isn’t approved to run in the machines. For example, we ran into jamming problems with a pre-printed stock that a customer requested,”

Brownell continued. “We work hard to educate our sales people on what works best in the equipment and we test customer-supplied stocks before getting into production with an untried paper stock. Our sales people think the machines can run anything and of course the recommended stocks always run better.”

More Than Just A Pretty Paper

In addition to the DocuCard stock, Gage Marketing uses the Xerox Digital Color Xpressions 94 24 lb Bright White for business-to-business letters and the Digital Color Xpressions Gloss 80 lb Coated Cover which really prints well on the DocuColor 2060 and Gage customers especially like the results.

“One project we’re particularly excited about is the single-sheet combination UPS label and packing slip. All the printed information on the slip is

variable data taken from Gage's GEM system, their proprietary production tracking system. The print quality is exceptional. We find that we can be more productive and there are fewer errors because we have eliminated the manual process of matching up two separate sheets to get a package ready to ship," Brownell explained. "The single-sheet label/packing slip is printed on the DocuTech 6180 and attached to the order after it has been picked and packed. Gage prints an average of 1500 packing slips weekly and is expecting all production labels to be converted to this process shortly.

Gage Marketing Services is creating a new roadmap for the future of their variable data digital publishing based on some of the same manufacturing principles their customers follow. Although Gage does not make automobiles themselves, some would say that their responsibility is even greater – they help keep the cars rolling safely and make the automobile makers look good, just in time, every time.

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