



Order management solution reduces operating costs, improves efficiency and handles volume spikes

“The Affinity Express team is doing a great job and has been very consistent with meeting their daily productivity goals. Plus, they have been very receptive to taking on new challenges!”

Client Director of Customer Services

One of the Affinity Express clients is a leading supplier of custom imprinted promotional products, which sells across the U.S. and Europe through a chain of distributors. The client’s mission is to make top-quality, affordable products available, while continuously developing innovative new product lines. The client has a solid reputation of exemplary service and reliable delivery established over more than 50 years in the industry. The client receives orders from its dealers through various channels such as the website, email, telephone and fax; which are submitted to their centralized system.

Challenges

In 2006, the client was incurring high costs in hiring and training for its in-house order management operation. Finding the right employees and retaining them was also a challenge. In addition, sales in the promotional products industry are seasonal. There are peaks during certain months of the year, adding to the difficulty in staffing. The client has a diverse range of products all with different specifications that need to be understood by the order taking personnel. This requires close attention to details and understanding of dealer requirements while entering or while entering orders in the system. New products introductions necessitate regular training for the order taking people in the products, specifications and features.

Another major challenge was receiving a large number of orders through various sources and executing order management through a centralized application, which addressed functions related to inventory, credit checks, shipping and invoicing.

Due to the crucial role of the application in enabling visibility across the supply chain,

even small errors in order entry had severe effects on the overall operations. Moreover, confidentiality of data was of utmost importance. As a result, the client wanted to restrict integration of their system with external providers and would only allow very limited access.

Affinity Express Solution

The client partnered with Affinity Express to transform their order management process. The goals were to reduce the cost of operations and concentrate their internal personnel on the company’s core competencies.

In its quest to understand the client products, specifications, process and system, the Affinity Express team did a thorough study of processes and procedures. An effective solution was developed to address the challenges and help the client successfully outsource the back-end order entry function to the Affinity Express offshore facility in India and improve the operational efficiency of the order management process.

Furthermore, the Affinity Express IT Team did a comprehensive analysis of the client systems and its protocols to design the infrastructure needed to access it in a secure environment, while allowing the order entry team access to meet the requirements for speed and efficiency.

The order entry team started working on a small project and successfully proved its ability to take over the function. Affinity Express worked together with the client as though it was an extension of the internal team and trained in new products through online video conferencing and VOIP solutions.



“ I want to thank our Affinity Express team for the extra hours they worked on Saturday. What a wonderful job was accomplished and it was comforting this morning to see that we were caught up. Again thank you for the support and teamwork. We appreciate the quick reaction on such short notice. ”

**Client Director of
Customer Services**

Some of the key advantages provided by Affinity Express include:

- Order entry support during the client operating hours
- Extra coverage to work on weekends in case of high volumes
- Additional capacity to handle the volumes during peak seasons
- IT support around the clock to ensure smooth functioning of the system

Managing Error Rates

Errors in order entry lead to incorrectly designed products and unsatisfied customers. To maintain the client's reputation of reliably delivering high quality, the Affinity Express quality assurance team remains dedicated to keeping error rates low. Today, the Affinity Express order entry team maintains accuracy levels of 99.7% and continuously strives to find methods to reduce error rates down to 0.1%.

Some of the means used by Affinity Express to lower error rates are:

- Track input and verification of each order entry form
- Track queries raised to the client regarding specific order forms
- Report error rates for each order entry agent and take precautions to improve the accuracy levels

Client Benefits

- 800+ orders processed daily
- Capacity during volume spikes
- Lower operating costs
- Reduction in errors
- Increased efficiency in the order processing cycle

Value Delivered

Affinity Express built a partnership that demonstrates the efficacy of the virtual business model. The relationship has grown over the last four years from a single product type with 100 orders per day to several product lines with more than 800 orders a day.

Affinity Express has enabled the client to free up internal resources to focus on the core business, reduce operating costs and increase efficiency.

About Affinity Express

Affinity Express is the leading onsite, onshore and offshore provider that is 100% dedicated to high-volume advertising and marketing production solutions. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Affinity Express maintains production centers in Pune, India and Manila, Philippines. Affinity Express delivers services 24 hours per day and six days per week, producing products in more than 30 software packages and multiple platforms. The company manages its unique creative process with a continuous improvement approach based on Lean Six Sigma, so that clients receive reliable output with fast turn times for their mission-critical digital files. The comprehensive, customized advertising and marketing production solutions of Affinity Express help clients lower production costs, generate higher profits and gain a competitive edge, without having to invest in establishing and maintaining these capabilities internally.

For more information, contact Affinity Express at (847) 930-3205 or visit www.affinityexpress.com