

Paperman

adds to the art of paper management

The web-based paper management system is saving money for a wide range of paper users and transforming the way that they deal with paper.

WHEN IT COMES TO IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE, McNaughton Publishing has a secret weapon. As more and more of its customers are looking for consignment stock management, the paper merchant has responded with the implementation of a sophisticated system to step up the level of paper management that it can offer publishers and other key customers.

"It's allowing McNaughton Publishing to differentiate ourselves," says sales director Jonathan Hunt. "More and more customers are looking for stock management services."

The tool the company is employing is Paperman, a web-based paper management application which keeps track of paper, where it is and how much has been used. For publishers, it means that the actual paper used for a title, what the wastage levels have been, and types of paper used are recorded and supplied back in real time. "That has grown out of customer demand," says Hunt.

Previously, McNaughton has had to rely on standard office spreadsheet applications which can cope with simple demands of a limited number of titles. As a publisher wants to control the paper demands for eight or nine magazines, each with different grades for the cover and text sections, and printed in different locations, the complexity of paper management rises exponentially. This service also requires timely and accurate information to come from the printers, which has not always been delivered.

McNaughton, therefore, began to look at ways to improve this and as part of its investigation into the different applications on the market, found Paperman. "What we had been using before was pretty rudimentary," says Hunt.

Paperman had been developed by JSA consultants, who had realised that the development of the Internet offered new ways of doing business, specifically in sharing business information. Paperman was already in use at Emap. As paper is delivered to the print plants, its arrival is recorded and how much is used on a job is also reported to the system as soon as the job is finished. This information becomes instantly accessible to the publisher.

There needed to be changes to tailor the publisher features that Paperman has, to the needs of the paper merchant, including facilities for consignment stock and invoicing customers in order to work for McNaughton. It also had to interface with McNaughton's mainframe where the invoices are generated. "We wanted Paperman to give us more functionality, to let us look at things like wastage levels and optimum reel sizes, to make sure that the customer was buying enough for stock, to check forecasts against the actual paper used. We have had to learn how to use these tools and how to sell them," says Hunt.

McNaughton is already using Paperman to manage most of the

paper requirements of Haymarket Publishing. This also involves paper that is ordered directly from UPM. McNaughton acts as third party provider in this case. "McNaughton places the order for UPM, on behalf of Haymarket," says Hunt. "We are acting as UPM's paper management company utilising Paperman. Publishers can either have their own licence or connect to the supplier's/merchant's licence.

The approach has been that, through the use of Paperman, the publisher can gain efficiencies and save money. This comes through having much more accurate figures and up to date information about what paper has been ordered, where it is and how much has been used. Stevens says: "We have proven that we can save 10% of paper usage, simply by optimizing stock levels, using the right reel widths, for example, to keep usage to a minimum. When the cost of the paper is more than 50% of the overall cost of a magazine, this level of saving can be significant. What we are doing is handing back control of paper to the publisher."

This is managed through secure web servers which track all changes whether logged by paper supplier, publisher or printer. The user has password-protected access to the section of the web site he is involved with, keeping him away from other customers. Pricing is not dealt with on the site, providing commercial sensitivity.

A printer, for example, would log the paper as it is delivered and, after the magazine has been printed, how much had been used. These figures become immediately available to the publisher so that accurate real time information is always available.

It also keeps track of paper consumption when a magazine's publisher adds an extra section at the last minute without informing everyone involved. For the publisher's production team with responsibility for paper, accurate figures can be supplied for management meetings and to the accounts department.

The information that Paperman provides can be integrated with other database systems and applications in a company's accounting department. Paperman provides the paper industry's standard Papinet electronic messaging. For Emap, this means that invoices from paper suppliers can be fed directly into its accounts department.

This ability to budget and forecast more accurately, as well as recording events and wastage more accurately, is a key attraction to the system, says Hunt. "Our aim is to help customers to be more efficient and to maximise the benefit they gain from buying through us."

In effect, Paperman is a tool and, like all tools, requires knowledge and experience to derive the greatest benefit. He explains: "You still require experienced and knowledgeable staff who are able to look

at the figures, interpret them and report back to the client, whether a publisher, corporate customer or printer. It could be that they are using an inappropriate paper for the job, which we can advise on. It is also allowing us to look at the companies that supply us, as we can take responsibility for stock that is delivered direct to the printer.”

Publishers who lack the experience in paper management, or the resource to take this on, are advised to work with Huie Associates, a specialist paper management consultant. Its founder Joyce Huie has been closely involved with Paperman since the outset, advising on implementations, training and the interface. Her company is also able to offer paper management as an outsourced service.

Says Stevens: “They can assist not only with training but can also take on the entire job if needed. Publishers, for example, don’t always want to take on extra staff.” The company’s role has included helping clients source alternative sources of supply, important last year during the Finnish paper strikes. “They will look after any number of paper stocks,” Stevens continues. “They can help any company using Paperman thanks to their extensive experience.”

This could be called on as interest in Paperman grows beyond its core base of publishers. The system has the flexibility to offer greater efficiencies to all types of paper specifier, including large corporates and print management companies who handle large volumes of different grades of paper.

“It’s a natural extension to take this to our corporate management team,” says Hunt, “which is offering paper management services as part of the portfolio.”

HH Associates is the first print management company to use Paperman. Others are expected to follow as accountability for paper use is included as part of contract renewal discussions, and is needed to fulfill the corporate responsibility policies of the end client.

Where Paperman will score is in meeting the requirements for FSC or PEFC chain of custody. The application will record the chain of custody numbers as part of recording usage of paper. Paperman can therefore be of great assistance in the mandatory annual audit. Equally, where a compliant paper is not available and an alternative has to be used, it will warn the user if the reel is not certified. Monitoring bodies do not take kindly to false claims, even if made

by accident.

In the end, Paperman is one of the second generation of Internet applications that, unlike those which appeared before the dotcom bubble exploded, is providing real benefit to businesses. It is about accurate, timely information flows and is about improving communications along the supply chain. And for Jonathan Hunt and McNaughton Publishing, “it’s about achieving the optimum service for our customers”.

- JSA licences Paperman directly to the publisher or paper supplier and works in association with Huie Associates on installation and training.
- Huie Associate is a specialist paper consultancy which has worked on implementing Paperman for users. It also offers a third-party paper management service.
- Paper merchant McNaughton is able to manage all the UPM paper used by Haymarket using Paperman, but Haymarket, having bought its own licence, can also manage all the other paper it uses which is not supplied by UPM.

Address: JSA Consultants Ltd, Fitzwilliam House, 3B High Street, Higham Ferrers, Wellingborough NN10 8BW
Telephone: 01933 358087
Email: john@paperman.net
Website: www.paperman.net

Address: James McNaughton Paper Group, Jaymac House, Valmar Road, Camberwell, London SE5 9NP
Telephone: 0870 2406112
Email: jhunt@mcnaughton-paper.com
Website: www.jmcpaper.com

Address: Huie Associates, 82 Darcy Road, London, SW16 4UA
Telephone: 020 8764 9991
Email: joyce@huieassociates.co.uk
Website: www.huieassociates.co.uk



John Stevens: Paperman has proven it can bring significant savings to publishers