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## Print MIS

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## New company grows business with online solution

by Nancy A. Hitchcock

After spending 18 years in the printing business as a partner in one of the largest full-service commercial printing companies in South Florida, Craig Tanner ventured out on his own, opening a new business with one goal: not to sell ink on paper.

"I no longer want to sell print," says Tanner. "I sell solutions and print just happens to be the byproduct."

Tanner started PrintBasics with two keys: his expertise and Printable Technologies' PrintOne online ordering solution. "The main reason I bought Printable is because the competition out there is brutal," states Tanner. "We've created a solution with Printable where customers can get their products cost-effectively and quickly. We're getting into consumables—forms, business cards, and stationery, for example—because businesses will always need consumables."

PrintBasics opened in August 2005, with three clients—Fortune 500 and 1000 companies—that support almost 700 offices. Operating with 11 employees, the company is on target to achieve more than \$2 million in sales annually, says Tanner.

### Overcoming obstacles

Initially, Tanner hired a company to build a website so that PrintBasics could offer web-based ordering. But the company couldn't deliver what was promised. Therefore, when Tanner saw Printable's PrintOne system at a printing show, he was pleased to find a proven solution that he could purchase off the shelf. The system enables a company to create corporate procurement portals

for its customers. Customers can then order static, versioned, variable, and inventoried items.

"Printable allows you to create a banner and custom colors on a front-page log-in so that when customers are logging in, they're seeing what appears to be their own customized website," explains Tanner. "Once they log in, we can break up the information however they want. Quite often, we'll place stationery, forms, and marketing materials as separate sections. We can have static forms on there, which are forms we pull off the shelf or forms that don't change. We can have variable items, such as envelopes, business cards, and letterhead, which they can typeset and proof online. We have one client that puts nylon bags on there that I don't make

for them, but we do the fulfillment. People order it on the website and we fulfill it."

For one of its clients, PrintBasics manages documents from static forms to variable data materials, such as blood pressure cards and brochures. PrintBasics keeps in stock two- and three-part preprinted forms that are packaged and shrink wrapped. When orders come in, employees place the orders through a warehousing system, pick and pack the items, and then ship them that day.

### Streamlining the process

After only 6 months of operation, the company is processing more than 100 orders per day, with about 50 percent of that coming in online. The goal is for at least 80 percent to be online by this time next year. Tanner notes how efficient the process is now that customers aren't continuously sending emails and faxes. "In the past, at previous companies, if an order came in for 47 different products, that became 47 job tickets which is very inefficient. Now it's one order that is picked, packed, and shipped, and we are able to simply invoice the purchase order number from the Printable system and attach a copy of it, and it's turned 47 orders into one order. That's a big time savings."

### Value-added services

The system also enables PrintBasics to generate reports—a value-added service for its customers. "I have one client who wants quarterly reports on what's being ordered by location. For another client, I'm doing reports on when products have been ordered and shipped. Now we can enter the UPS number into the bill of lading that emails back to the client a print summary of what was ordered and shipped. That is something that's a selling feature. If you can offer that, it makes doing business easier."

With the system tracking volumes, PrintBasics can make better decisions on how much inventory to keep in stock.

Tanner credits the technology for growing the company because he can be proactive in selling solutions to customers with multiple locations. The system enables PrintBasics to reach beyond the local market and manage inventory and ordering for many sites, taking that responsibility off the customer.

Most of their work is produced from client-supplied

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or Printable Technologies-driven, press-ready PDF files. "Using an online ordering system is definitely the wave of the future," says Tanner. "Typically, companies are either technology driven or hardware driven, with the biggest and best presses. Not many companies have put the two together. We're trying to follow the wave of technology and bring the two worlds together. It's the future of the

printing industry.

"Instead of competing against the thousands of printers trying to lowball estimates to win the big jobs," he concludes, "we are there day in and day out to meet the everyday needs of large corporations. There's a very small handful of printers doing what we're doing. The bottom line is we don't sell print anymore, we sell solutions, period."

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