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APPLICATION STUDY

Today's Special: M.I.S. Print and Brookshire Grocery

When 152 grocery stores depend on you everyday for all their signage from toothpaste to today's special on tomatoes, your print group better have some topnotch equipment to handle their print jobs.

No one knows this better than Brookshire's Grocery Doug Andrews, whose computer operations group handles all the print jobs required by the company's stores in Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi and Texas.

"We print 2 million sheets of shelf tags per month per printer," says Andrews who is based in Tyler, Texas at the Brookshire headquarters. "These tags are critical to each store's sales. If they don't get their tags, they're not selling their goods and then we've all got a problem."

When it came time to retire the computer group's aging printers, Andrews and his staff began making plans to transition to new technology that would keep the organization's printing operations running smoothly.

"We liked the new production printer, but we made it clear: we don't want to get involved in a conversion where we're devoting our budget to bringing in programming staff," recalls Andrews.

With Rochester Software Associates' M.I.S. Print software the customer's LCDS data streams would be automatically converted into PostScript allowing Brookshire Grocery to print their mainframe to the new printers. After visiting several other companies successfully employing the RSA solution, Andrews gave the green light to implement the solution.

M.I.S. Print was installed on the printer controller and on a separate RSA Sun-based Channel Server. The RSA Channel Server serves as the primary M.I.S. Print server for printers that do not have a print controller. It can also serve as the backup M.I.S. Print server. Print data is received by M.I.S. Print and automatically converted to PostScript for production on the new printers without requiring program or job process changes. With M.I.S. Print,



From left to right are: Michael L. Sheriff, Director, Printing Systems Group, First Equipment Company; Ron Stuart, Senior Printer Specialist, First Equipment Company; Buzz Walker, Production Cut Sheet Product Specialist, Printing Systems Division, IBM; Larry Johnigan, Operations Manager, Brookshire Grocery Company; and Doug Andrews, Data Center Operations Director, Brookshire Grocery Company

Brookshire Grocery Company now has the added flexibility to print both mainframe and network jobs simultaneously on the new printers, with no operator invention necessary.

Experts get Brookshire Grocery up & running

"The installation went very smoothly," Andrews recalls. "Everyone worked together as a team, so we had the benefit of knowledgeable RSA staff who really knew their own as well as other technology. Everyone worked hard to get us up and running without missing a beat."

While it's too early to place a dollar value, Andrews says the system's reliability has definitely reduced costs. "With more up time and fewer jams, we're getting jobs done faster and with less operator intervention. Moreover, we're getting very crisp output which makes our stores happy."

What makes the operators happy is M.I.S. Print's reprint capability. "In the past, if you needed to reprint part of a job, you'd have to take the time to get back into the job, go through it, find the pages you need to reprint. It was a very time consuming process. Now, with M.I.S. Print's reprint feature, that's all in the past. We just find the job listed on the M.I.S. Print menu and select it. We can reprint as many copies or whatever section of the job we need without reprocessing the jobs at the host. That's a valuable feature for us," says Andrews.

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Doug Andrew
Data Center Operations
Director

The logo consists of three dark purple rectangular boxes, each containing a white letter: 'R', 'S', and 'A'. The boxes are arranged horizontally and are connected by thin white lines that extend downwards from the bottom of each box, forming a vertical line that runs down the left side of the page.

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M.I.S. Print's resource replication feature also makes it easy to load new resources and then distribute them to other printers at the click of a button. Once a new resource is loaded, selecting replicate instantly updates only the changed resources to the configured copies of M.I.S. Print on the network.

Among the benefits: M.I.S. Print's ability to interpret OTEXT, or operator text, messages. On the previous printers, text messages would appear on the LPS printer console to halt production in order for the operator to place certain paper types in the printer. Now this manual process is streamlined by M.I.S. Print's automation features, which are installed and maintained by RSA.

Maintenance that's easy as pie

Maintenance is also easy with RSA's 24/7 support, says Larry Johnigan, computer operations manager for Brookshire Grocery. "RSA responds immediately to our questions," observes Johnigan. "We've been in the middle of production and something would come up. While talking on the phone to RSA they'd dial up remotely to see what was going on with our system and resolve any issues while we were on the phone. That's impressive. If we drop the ball with our printing projects, it's dramatic. So being able to address things that come up without missing a beat is absolutely key. We have to keep it seamless for our stores. And that's what we're able to do with this new RSA system."

Future plans include calling on M.I.S. Print's networking capability to bring in jobs from other departments as well. "For larger jobs, it makes sense to send it over to us rather than going through the time and expense of printing them out on desktop printers," points out Johnigan.

"We're pleased with our current system," he continues. "The technology is serving our needs and the RSA team made it effortless for us."

A sweet partnership

The IT Specialist states "I have worked with Rochester Software Associates for over ten years and as always, they catered to the customer's needs at Brookshire Grocery Company. Every step of the way I can honestly say, RSA was very easy to work with. I can count on RSA to listen to what the customer wants, evaluate, then execute." He continues, "RSA continually looks outside the box to put together a solution that has proven itself over and over again."