Card Create Greeted With Success: Automated Card Production Keeps Hallmark as the King of Cards

Customised software solution from specialists Mapsoft results in a more streamlined and efficient production process for Hallmark, saving time, money and resources.

Hallmark, the UK's leading greetings card publisher, has introduced a customised software solution which has automated the card design process - increasing efficiency, saving time and money, and streamlining the annual production of 2.2 billion cards.

The solution has been custom-designed by software specialists Mapsoft to automate the process of composing individual design layouts for around 8,000 card designs onto the card template before printing begins.

Card Create is a PDF, server-based solution which has replaced Hallmark's previous paper-based, manual system enabling Hallmark to automate the process of inserting barcodes and pricing onto individual card templates.

Hallmark has deployed the solution at its Hambledon Studios, the division responsible for producing cards for wholesale. An end-to-end server-based solution, *Card Create* has streamlined design and production, eliminated unnecessary administration and reduced the room for error.

Given the wholesale nature of production at Hambledon Studios and the high-volume production it sees, a solution was required which would be able to automatically insert the necessary card information for designs which can have up to 200 individual permutations and variations.

Card Create means that graphic designers no longer waste valuable time trawling through thousands of variants of editorial content and linking them up to the accompanying barcodes and design information. Now the information

is collated just once at the start of the design process and can then be inserted into individual cards automatically.

The previous paper-based system was time-consuming and inefficient, with the same data being inputted up to five times during the design and production process. With five inputting stages there were also five potential occasions where errors could be made, especially with 8-digit barcodes being reproduced – there was a much greater margin for error which reduced business efficiency and consequently business margins.

Hallmark needed a PDF-based solution which would remove this margin for error, reduce the level of manual input required, and standardise and automate the high-volume production at Hambledon Studios. Vanessa Redshaw, Digital Technology Manager at Hallmark said: "As a registered Adobe business partner, Mapsoft had the experience and expertise to create a solution tailor-made to meet our specific business needs.

"*Card Create* has now become a standard and indeed essential element of the card production process. It has successfully reduced not only the margin for error, but also the amount of administration required. Our Repro Graphics Operators are now free to do what they do best – Repro!

"We hope to extend the solution to other business divisions within Hallmark, to further streamline and automate the production process, increasing efficiency and equipping Hallmark for the future."

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