

Modest investment 5 Years Ago in DRV Forms Software Brings Nearly 4 million in Savings to U.S. Distributor



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PRIMARY ARCHITECT/DEVELOPER ON THE I SERIES FOR AMERICOLD AT THE TIME THE AMERICOLD/DRV TECH PROJECT WAS INITIATED.

AMERICOLD AMERICOLD.com

Americold is the global leader in temperature-controlled warehousing and logistics to the food industry, offering the most comprehensive warehousing, transportation, and logistics solutions in the world. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, Americold owns and operates over 182 temperature-controlled warehouses in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China, Argentina, and Canada.

CHALLENGE

Reduce huge invoicing costs (750 K annually)

SOLUTION FormFlex

Periodically we like to go back to our clients and see how our software is performing. We checked in with Americold Logistics, the largest provider of temperature-controlled food distribution services in the United States. Five years ago, Americold was using homegrown legacy applications on their IBM i to manually generate 15,000 individual invoices and mail them to its clients each month. The process was putting a strain on employees and costing a fortune in wages, paper, and printing.

As management was starting to evaluate new tools that could speed up the process and cut costs, a further incentive to decrease paper usage was provided with a company-wide “Go Green” initiative. After evaluating several software solutions that could replace preprinted forms with electronic forms and that could track and store individual invoices for each customer, the company purchased the DRV Tech FormFlex tools.

Five years later, Business Systems Analyst Sheila Wolf calls it one of the best purchases the company has ever made. “We’ve saved more than 750,000 a year in labor, printing, ink, and storage costs. I wish every application we’ve purchased was this good.”

Wolf says the application runs every day and works perfectly to automate the company’s iSeries-based invoicing to customers. “It hasn’t wavered or fluctuated even with the additional growth of our client base. We have gone from 120 facilities 5 years ago to more than 180 today. When we first started it was “invitation only” to select groups of customers asking if they would like to move to electronic invoicing. We had to personally contact the customer to make the change. Now it is a routine part of customer set-up. There are a very few hold-outs who still want to be mailed a paper invoice, the vast majority choose electronic invoicing,” said Wolf.



Five years ago the platform went live with approximately 1200-1300 customers. Today, over 2100 customers receive their invoices using the FormFlex tool. Wolf credits the excellent customer training and support the team received prior to launch with getting the new invoicing program off to a successful start. Wolf and the Americold team actually test-called software vendors prior to signing a contract to gauge responsiveness. DRV Tech came out ahead and Wolf says the support they received early on went above and beyond the software purchase.

“Their customer service and forms people are absolutely excellent. DRV helped us to sort out a challenge that came up during parallel testing of the electronic invoicing. Our customers were requesting batch distribution of receipt documents. This was not part of the software but we took the problem to the DRV team. They enhanced the software to accommodate us and made sure we got a free upgrade as soon as it was available,” said Wolf.

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According to Wolf, the service and responsiveness from DRV continues year after year, although she has had few occasions to reach out for help. “The software provides tools that allow us to do nearly all the customizations or minor enhancements we need on our own. Occasionally we have needed to update logos. Legal verbiage is an important update that we make to the forms but all this is easily done in-house.

Wolf says that in her experience it is rare to buy a prepackaged tool that exceeds expectations, especially one that comes with customer service that also exceeds expectations. “We can’t afford to lose a step with the large volume of invoices that go out each month. We process 10,000 invoices a month on one of our iSeries servers and 18,000 a month on another server through the DRV SpoolFlex tool. With volume like that, it is critical to be bug-free. Working with DRV has been a wonderful win for Americold,” said Wolf.

For additional information on the DRV Tech solution for Americold, [click here](#) to read an article in System iNews.

