

SmartDraw Software's Visual Process Management Solution Improves Efficiency by 25% for L+L Printers



Leading Southern California Printing Firm Saves Time and Money by Visually Documenting and Sharing Processes Company-Wide

As a full-service commercial printing company in Southern California, L+L Printers specializes in both offset and digital printing. In addition to its core business, L+L offers mailing services, web-to-print storefronts, PURL campaigns, print-on-demand, variable printing, full prepress and bindery services as well as stochastic screening.



The Need for Documentation

Many of L+L's premier accounts – large corporations in the pharmaceutical and electronics industry – require extensive documentation of internal quality control processes. And, while L+L had this documentation, it had lost its relevancy while it was gathering dust on the general manager's shelf for over a decade.

"In the past L+L would capture processes ineffectively. The processes were all drawn out on pieces of paper that were stuck in a filing cabinet someplace," said Bob Dixon, President, Digital Division. "I didn't even realize that we had most of our processes documented because it was in somebody's filing cabinet and I didn't know it was there."

Because their existing documentation needed updating and their business model was shifting towards more digital printing and on-demand fulfillment, L+L needed a way to get both their traditional printing processes and their newer digitally-oriented processes into a new set of documentation. This new set of documentation would not only have to communicate L+L's comprehensive quality control to prospective clients but also be immediately accessible to employees.

The Visual Process Management Solution

To solve this problem, L+L implemented SmartDraw Software's Visual Process Management (VPM) solution, an entirely new way of capturing and storing process and organizational information.

"VPM has benefited L+L through helping us to better understand roadblocks and inefficiencies in our processes."

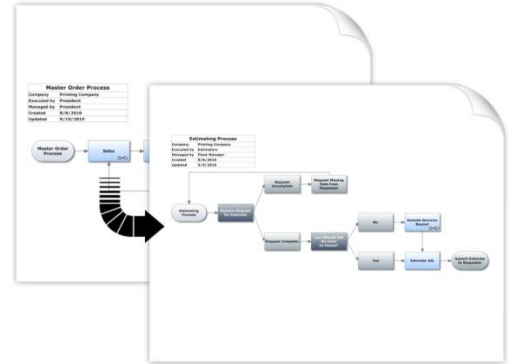
Bob Dixon
President,
Digital Division

“With the help of SmartDaw, we improved our processes and reduced our workload by 25%.”

Carl Davenport
President,
Offset Division

A VPM Collection is a complete electronic model of an organization. It links every process with the position that is responsible for executing it and managing it. It separates, complex processes into smaller components that are easy to manage and understand and links them to each other.

Unlike traditional documentation, which typically resides in binders and folders in a filing cabinet, a VPM collection is entirely digital and is stored on a server which everyone in the company can easily access and view. Users with sufficient rights can instantly make changes as needed.



One of the greatest improvements of VPM over traditional methods is the live capture of information. In this method a VPM facilitator interviews each employee and, using SmartDraw, documents their processes in *real time* in a single pass. This way processes can be captured and documented extremely quickly. It took less than 40 hours of meeting time to document all of L+L's processes—more that 120 flowcharts in all.

The live-capture method was not only exponentially faster than traditional methods—it was also more enlightening for L+L's management team. With their processes laid out visually in front of them, they could recognize and solve major problems in their operation.

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It’s enabled us to land some big accounts. ”

Bill Anderson
CEO

“VPM has helped us to better understand roadblocks in our workloads,” said Bob Dixon. “We use SmartDraw on a daily basis to test out potential work flows and try to remove the number of touches we have on our jobs,” added Carl Davenport, President Offset Division. “With the help of SmartDraw, we improved our processes and reduced our workload by 25%.”



Most notably, L+L discovered that as an offset printing company that utilized processes which were optimized specifically around the usage of large high-speed printing presses, that they had unknowingly adapted the same processes to the newer digital presses. During the live documentation process of the customer service department, it quickly became apparent that the customer service representatives were doing the same amount of work for both offset and digital printing jobs—except the average offset job is \$5,000 and the average digital job is only \$500. As a result L+L modified their processes, which increased their throughput by 25%.

“I would absolutely recommend VPM to other companies. It’s been a wonderful exercise for us and [VPM] continues to be a tool that we use every single day.”

Bob Dixon
President,
Digital Division

The visibility into the internal workings of L+L’s processes provided value not only through process improvement, but also by creating a set of documentation to show off their quality control practices to prospective clients. Because they now have a living collection of their processes, potential clients have been “very impressed” with the VPM collection and L+L has consequently earned several large contracts that it may not have received otherwise.

“We’ve seen measurable ROI from using the SmartDraw processes especially in how it relates to new clients’ requests for information on us,” said Bill Anderson, L+L Printers’ CEO. “It’s enabled us to land some big accounts.”

The Advantages of Live Documentation

Because the VPM collection stored electronically on the file server, where it is accessible to all L+L employees, it sees daily use which has led to a variety of benefits.

Visibility and Proactive Process Improvement

The greatest benefit of having a VPM collection is complete process visibility. Because of the way the documentation is organized, anyone can view any process, and people actually use the documentation. In fact, the VPM collection initiated a change in company culture at L+L. Instead of having a reactive attitude towards process documentation, L+L employees began to develop a more proactive attitude towards process documentation. Employees and managers started to reference the collection daily and could make continual improvements to their processes.

15% Reduction in Training Time

Because of its effectiveness, L+L’s VPM collection was adopted as the organization’s training tool. In a VPM collection, each one of the processes is assigned to both a position in the company which manages the process and a position which executes that process. All the processes which are either managed or executed by a position are listed in a special index file called a “job map” which contains a link to each of the processes associated with that position. Having all of a position’s processes referenced in a single place greatly decreases the time it takes to train a new employee because they can easily find, view and contextualize the processes that they are responsible for.



Not only did VPM greatly speed up the training process by an estimated 15%, but having an up-to-date set of documentation to show prospective clients also generated new business for L+L Printers. What’s more, having VPM at everyone’s fingertips also began a shift in company culture which fosters the continual improvement and refining of processes.

“I would absolutely recommend VPM to other companies. It’s been a wonderful exercise for us and [VPM] continues to be a tool that we use every single day,” said Dixon.

For more information about Visual Process Management by SmartDraw Software, visit www.SmartDraw.com.

About SmartDraw Software

SmartDraw Software helps businesses increase their bottom line by improving communication, refining operations, completing projects on time, and successfully implementing their plans through the everyday use of visual communication. SmartDraw Software enables business professionals to easily and automatically create more than 70 types of common business visuals, including flowcharts, project charts, mind maps, org charts, timelines and charts, to achieve presentation-quality visuals in just minutes to enhance understanding and knowledge retention. SmartDraw is used by more than half of the Fortune 500, and thousands of law firms, police departments, health systems and private enterprises of all sizes. For more information or to download a free trial of SmartDraw, please visit www.SmartDraw.com.

About L+L Printers

L+L Printers is a full-service commercial printing company specializing in both offset and digital printing. Additionally, L+L offers mailing services, web-to-print storefronts, PURL campaigns, print-on-demand, variable printing, full prepress and bindery services as well as stochastic screening. Established in 1959, L+L Printers is now one of the largest printing companies in Southern California.