

Case Study: Physicians Mutual

Insurance company's in-plant sees big results with Ricoh's workflow automation and managed print service benefits

About our customer

Physicians Mutual is a national provider of health, life and retirement products since 1902, and its family of companies includes Physicians Mutual Insurance Company and Physicians Life Insurance Company. Physicians Mutual Insurance Company offers reliable dental, supplemental health and pet insurance. Physicians Life Insurance Company provides important Medicare Supplement, life insurance, and funeral pre-planning coverage. Headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, the companies have over \$4 billion in assets and consistently maintain some of the highest financial strength ratings in the nation from independent insurance analysts, such as A.M. Best Company and Weiss Ratings. To learn more about the company, visit PhysiciansMutual.com.



Physicians Mutual[®]
Insurance for all of us.[®]

Challenge

- Broken processes, lack of interoperability and legacy systems create bottlenecks with limited visibility into orders
- No software for processes requires laborious manual data entry
- Master Scheduler walked the production floor multiple times to understand job status and meet SLAs
- Reporting was cumbersome due to manual processes

“Working with Ricoh to transform, automate, and modernize our graphic communications hardware and software was priceless.”

— Aji George, Assistant VP of Document Processing & Imaging, Physicians Mutual

Aji George, Assistant Vice President of Document Processing & Imaging at Physicians Mutual, had a large team working on 200 new print orders daily with 30 million pieces printed annually. Print jobs required manual steps, including repetitive data entry into a database — and then again into their accounting system — making tracking orders difficult. Reporting was a heavy lift without technology, and managers had to walk the floor asking for status updates frequently.

When the time came to reassess print vendors, George wanted quality, reliable products, and a strategic, trusted partner to help him create a state-of-the-art facility, and optimize managed print service benefits.

“My goal is to always look five years forward, innovate, and strive to be the best,” George explained. “Our biggest challenges were bottlenecks with our printers. We turned to Ricoh to be a strategic partner and they gave us exactly that.”

Solution

- Leveraged Print Workflow Automation Services
- Integrated hardware and software solutions to drive efficiency, saving up to \$600,000 annually
- Guided the company to more sustainable solutions, reducing paper and realigning employees with higher-value roles
- Utilized Ricoh experts through Managed Services both on and offsite

“The ability to pull out data is the best part about Avanti Slingshot. Prior to our new solution with Ricoh’s guidance, it took about one hour to fill out paperwork and now we can automatically print a report or scan something in seconds.”

— Rob French, Production Manager, Document Processing & Imaging, Physicians Mutual

Aji George and Rob French, Production Manager, Document Processing & Imaging, at Physicians Mutual, worked closely with the Ricoh team, growing their fleet of Ricoh printers, hardware, software, and updating old systems. A comprehensive overhaul was needed, and the team moved forward with a Workflow Automation (WFA) Services plan, including Avanti Slingshot, a next-generation Print Management Information System, incorporating business intelligence, production planning, shipping, and billing into one platform.

Physicians Mutual's Print Workflow Automation Solutions

Avanti Slingshot™	RICOH Pro VC40000 and Tecna Pre and Post Finishing
Managed Services team	Opex Falcon Plus
Objectif Lune PlanetPress® Connect	RICOH 7210, 8320, 8320M, 9210
RICOH ProcessDirector™	Duplo Folder, and Slitter/Cutter/Creaser
Mavro: Automated document processing solution	Epson Sure Color T-Series
RSA WebCRD™	Xante Impressia with iQueue and Fujipla ALM3230

The combination of WFA solutions eliminated extra steps, especially for post-process finishing, which initially took days of labor to prep documents for mail-inserting equipment. The new tools enabled Physicians Mutual to provide PDFs and samples of print files during the pandemic when customers were working from home, without missing a beat. The WebCRD platform cut down service times from 7 days to 6 days so they could sell more and finish orders faster.

“Working with Ricoh to transform, automate, and modernize our graphic communications hardware and software was priceless,” said George. With WFA Services, they also eliminated over 1,200 preprinted forms, saving approximately \$500,000-\$600,000 per year in paper.

Physicians Mutual also engaged Ricoh’s Managed Services team for deep expertise to assist onsite. The combination of skilled people and better automated processes brought substantial results, managed print service benefits, and a quick return on investment.

Results

- Lowered department costs by 28% in staff reallocation efficiency and 7% in production costs
- Boosted employee and customer satisfaction
- 15-20% efficiency gains by automating job tickets
- 98% time-savings running reports with Avanti Slingshot: from one hour to one minute
- Automated processes save the Master Scheduler 2 hours daily or 25%
- WebCRD cut service level time by 14%, from 7 days to 6 days so they could sell more and complete jobs faster
- Saves hundreds of hours per year with RICOH ProcessDirector
- Operating hours decreased by 56% with modern, continuous feed printers

Avanti Slingshot makes an impact

Covering the entire print workflow process, Avanti Slingshot was a main driver in transforming the in-plant business. The team has acute visibility of their work-in-process, which allows them to meet SLA requirements at expected levels. Chargeback and other reporting (such as employee utilization and productivity) were reduced by hours.

Avanti Slingshot also limited redundant processes, data entry, and record retention. French explained that it used to take the Master Scheduler two hours to walk the floor each day to inquire about each job status. Now, he receives real-time data at his desk, increasing efficiency and accelerating orders.

The platform significantly reduced manual touchpoints for mailings, decreased production time, and expedited premium processing. With increased efficiency, 28% or 30 employees were reallocated to focus on higher-value work. Not only did employee job satisfaction improve but customers experienced expedited delivery of their orders.



Print solutions elevate customers, employees and the bottom line

RICOH ProcessDirector saves Physicians Mutual hundreds of hours annually due to faster pre- and post-press processing, better collaboration with the Marketing team in creating perf recipes and image overlays, and the ability to automatically select samples for marketing review — all contributing to major cost savings. Customers are getting speedy deliveries with more productive employees. Automating processes and creating a better infrastructure allows Physicians Mutual to be more flexible, scalable, and adaptable in any economic downturn, labor shortage, new product offering, or unforeseen changes.

Over 700 agents now use the WebCRD platform to place their orders. By automating the ordering process, Physicians Mutual only needs two people monitoring jobs, a process that used to be accomplished by seven staff.

The continuous feed printers also streamline operations by allowing in-plant hours to change from being open 24 to 10.5 hours, requiring fewer shifts and overhead. The new printers increased output by 2.5X from 23,000 to 55,000 pages per minute. ROI was quick, quality was enhanced, and employees had a better work balance. “All of our Ricoh printers have paid off themselves,” stated George.

“We’re incredibly grateful to our Ricoh team — from sales and service to support — it’s been an incredible journey and a true partnership,” said George. “Employees are our biggest asset and engagement is key to success. We still have a lot to accomplish but our long-term vision is paying off.”



To learn more about our print workflow automation services, managed print service benefits, and process optimization, [request an assessment here.](#)

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