

Rollaboard® suitcase inventor automates sales order processing—saves thousands of dollars in operational costs.



CASE HIGHLIGHTS

Profiled Organization: Travelpro, Boca Raton, Florida

Challenge: To make importing sales orders into the ERP system for processing more efficient and accurate and to eliminate the need for manual order validation and nightly processing.

Solution: To automate the daily task of accurately importing website and email orders into the order processing system and the running of the nightly process.

Benefits: Automation Anywhere has freed up customer service personnel from routine order import duties and eliminated the need for hiring extra personnel to handle the nightly process.

BACKGROUND

Travelpro began as an idea of Northwest Airline pilot Bob Plath who invented the original Rollaboard® wheeled suitcase that the company is famous for back in 1987. Today, Travelpro International is the leading supplier of lightweight and carry-on luggage to frequent fliers and airline personnel. About two years ago, just about the time the company's line of Rollaboard® suitcases were landing a starring role opposite George Clooney in the Oscar-nominated movie "Up in the Air," Travelpro's MIS department began looking into automating some of the company's routine processes—such as the handling of daily sales orders, inventory adjustments, and invoicing—to improve efficiency and pare down costs.

The company uses Fourth Shift's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system along with the Sales Order Processing (SOP) module to handle all its accounting and sales order processing. Robert Sandore, who has been with Travelpro's MIS department for almost five years and is responsible for all the in-house programming and development work, had recently set up a website to encourage customers—large and small retail stores, since the company does not sell directly to customers—to move away from fax and paper order sheets to online ordering. The next step was to automate the process of importing orders from the website into the SOP module.

APP INTEGRATION, IMAGE RECOGNITION SAVE THE DAY

Sandore found Automation Anywhere the old-fashioned way—through a web search. In the course of a rigorous trial period during which he compared it to other automation products, Sandore discovered the two Automation Anywhere features that sold him on the product: App Integration and Image Recognition.

"Without App Integration—which makes it possible to copy and paste text from a button—we couldn't have automated our sales order processing," admits Sandore.

"App Integration is a wonderful piece of this tool! Without it, we could not have automated our order processing."

*- Robert Sandore,
MIS Department, Travelpro*

"Image recognition is a very important feature of Automation Anywhere. Without it, working with GUI is a huge challenge because you can't always rely on certain things being where they are supposed to be."

*- Robert Sandore,
MIS Department, Travelpro*

"If I ever got a call from a former employer or colleague asking for a recommendation, I would have no hesitation in recommending Automation Anywhere."

*- Robert Sandore,
MIS Department, Travelpro*

"The same with the image recognition feature—which is crucial for GUI—because you cannot always rely on everything at a website being exactly where it is supposed to be."

The only feasible way to import sales orders from the website into the SOP module is to open an application, click on Import Orders to bring the file into the system, check for errors, then process the orders. Not counting orders received via email, fax, or other means, Travelpro processes up to 300 orders per week through the website alone. Some weekends, the company receives as many as 30 orders from one customer, which used to take a person up to two hours to key in manually. Since automating the process, Travelpro has been able to free up more of its customer service personnel to work on customer support rather than routine order processing.

Sandore has also written a program that can read a standard format email and extract relevant data to build a sales order, which Automation Anywhere then brings into the system for pricing and processing.

SAVING THOUSANDS ON NIGHTLY PROCESSING

Another top priority for Sandore and the MIS department was the nightly validation process of all orders shipped each day so that the inventory can be adjusted and the invoicing done. The company used to hire someone to work the 3:00 PM to midnight shift performing the various routine tasks involved—launching an Access program, importing files, checking for duplicates or errors.

"We were hiring one body essentially to push a series of buttons," says Sandore. "Since putting Automation Anywhere to work, we have been able to eliminate the need for that extra headcount, which amounts to a substantial savings for the company."

Automation Anywhere has reduced the entire process to two steps: (1) launching and (2) moderating, that is checking error reports. The program kicks off on schedule every evening and the job is completed in 30 minutes. If the process fails for any reason, such as errors in the data, the program sends an email to the person on call. If the employee on call happens to not be an IT person, they call Sandore who then goes into the system to investigate the cause of the problem.

With the success of the sales order and nightly processing systems behind him, Sandore is now looking into automating the morning process and also the process of bringing in orders from the EDI system.



PRODUCT INFORMATION: AUTOMATION ANYWHERE

Automation Anywhere is an intelligent automation software for business & IT tasks. No programming required. Features include state of the art drag and drop automation, remote deployment, Visualizer, Workflow designer, image recognition and much more. Free trial available. Read more about this product at <http://www.AutomationAnywhere.com> or call our sales hotline +1-888-484-3535.