



ECVC turned to Vertex Systems because of the company's experience in providing software exclusively for organizations that serve people with disabilities

Information powered results for human services.

Overview

Eastern Carolina Vocational Center sought an integrated software system that would allow the agency to automate its client payroll and accounting efficiently. ECVC turned to Vertex Systems Corp., which implemented a powerful and effective solution designed especially for organizations that serve people with disabilities. In addition to helping ECVC quickly and efficiently perform its vital business functions, Vertex also extended ECVC's capabilities to automate the agency's order and shipping processes. As a result, ECVC has posted an impressive string of successes, including many valuable government contracts and dozens of awards for on-time shipping excellence.



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About Vertex Systems

Vertex creates intuitive, cost-effective information-management software designed specifically for organizations that serve people with barriers to employment or independent living. For 25 years we have focused exclusively on the unique requirements of community-service agencies, helping them meet the complex, ever-changing demands of their consumers, regulators, and funding sources.

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Daneel le Roux, President
Eastern Carolina Vocational Center

Situation

By virtually any measure, Greenville, N.C.-based Eastern Carolina Vocational Center is enjoying unprecedented success. It provides job training opportunities to some 350 people with disabilities per year and places about 70 in community jobs. Its government-contract shipments have nearly doubled in the space of a year and it consistently wins awards for shipment timeliness. ECVC makes an average of more than 3,000 shipments per month. And ECVC's budget of \$24 million makes it one of the largest agencies of its type in North Carolina.

ECVC is a private not-for-profit corporation whose programs include facility-based vocational evaluation, work adjustment training, and work services. In addition, community-based services include job development/placement, job coaching, and long-term case management to support job maintenance.

ECVC's training areas include picture frame and battery terminal manufacturing, packaging, and recycling. Its community placement sites include a wide range of occupations, especially in the service industry.

Established in 1965, ECVC's mission is to help persons with disabilities attain a higher quality of life through achievement of their vocational goals. ECVC hit rough times in the mid-1980s. “The government took some nice contracts away from us because we couldn't deliver on time and our product was not the quality they wanted,” recalls Daneel le Roux, ECVC's President. “At that time, we made a decision to improve our quality and to not use the word ‘delinquency’ anymore. We made a commitment to deliver on time—

even if we had to go downtown, buy at retail and sell to the government at a loss.”

Solution

In addition to changing the mindset of the agency, ECVC sought to implement a computer system that would allow it to streamline operations and provide additional management information. ECVC turned to Vertex Systems because of the company's experience in providing software exclusively for organizations that serve people with disabilities.

ECVC currently relies upon a fully integrated software system consisting of several Vertex solutions, including Client Payroll Manager, Automated Order Processing and Job Manager, all sitting atop a Microsoft Dynamics NAV financial accounting system. This system allows ECVC to perform virtually all its vital business functions, including electronic and manual order entry, invoicing, payroll time entry and generation for clients and staff, payables and receivables, general ledger functions, electronic payment entry, an array of EDI X12 transmissions and comprehensive reporting.

For example, ECVC's rehabilitation program office staff uses Vertex not only for calculating complex subminimum payroll, but also to automate the task of recording daily progress notes used for Fee-For-Service Billing. At month-end, the staff pulls units of service based on activity code, prints out progress reports for management and submits these results to ECVC's funding agency. In the past, all these activities were performed manually, “which was very labor-intensive and often



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Eastern Carolina Vocational Center

resulted in errors,” says Lisa Ward-Ross, ECVC’s Vice President of Rehabilitation Services/Human Resources.

And since implementing the Vertex systems to help automate its high-volume order and shipping processes, ECVC has seen its fortunes rise dramatically. The agency has secured numerous contracts to supply batteries and other products to the U.S. Department of Defense and General Services Administration. In fact, ECVC now ships more orders to the Defense Department than any other JWOD agency, according to le Roux.

Using the combined Vertex Financial Manager, which is based upon Microsoft Dynamics NAV, ECVC is easily able to keep pace with an average of 160 separate orders it receives each day via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Each step of the process is automated—from the time orders are received to the time they’re shipped and an invoice is created and sent. “The Vertex Automated Order system requires only one person to receive 40,000 federal customer orders per year, acknowledge their receipt, prepare invoices, notify customers of shipping information and receive electronic payment of each invoice,” says Bob Jones, ECVC’s Executive Vice President. “That is a total of 200,000 separate transactions per year performed by one person with an error rate of virtually zero.”

That’s no small task, especially given the high volume of shipments and strict government regulations that cover such things as bar coding, delivery timeliness and even the specific information that needs to appear on the package labeling.

Benefits

Consistent, on-time shipping. Shipping benefits ECVC enjoys include:

- **Rapid, high-volume order processing**—According to ECVC’s government contract, orders the agency receives on Mondays and Fridays need to be shipped the same day, while orders it receives on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays can be shipped the following day. By using Vertex to automate and streamline its shipping processes, ECVC is able to ship all orders on the same day they’re received. And of the more than

25,000 orders ECVC shipped in 2005, not a single one was delinquent.

- **Reduced number of order processors**—“If it weren’t for the automation from our Vertex system, it would probably take at least five or six people to process the paperwork that a single person does in one day,” says le Roux.

Agrees Jones: “Although the people in our organization are responsible for our success, Vertex’s software is the tool we use to process the huge volumes of data in very short periods of time, as required by our contracts.”

- **Award-winning, on-time performance**—With the help of Vertex, ECVC has earned high praise from its customers for the timeliness of its shipments. “We received our first Gold Award from the Department of Defense in 1993 for delivering all of our orders on time,” le Roux says. “Then we won another the year after. Now, we’re up to 14 years in a row.”

Increased market share. The positive reputation ECVC has forged with the U.S. Defense Department in turn creates new and additional opportunities for sales, le Roux says. “Vertex has enhanced our ability to satisfy customers and gain market share. “Being on time with our shipments and having a quality product has put us in favorable situation to get additional contracts. That’s why the total of our orders went from 25,000 in 2005 to 40,000 this year.”

Automated case management system saves time, reduces errors. ECVC realizes a wealth of benefits from having an automated system for entering and sharing case notes. This includes time savings, fewer errors, reduced paperwork and increased staff productivity. “It’s obvious that using Vertex to track units of service for billing purposes requires far fewer man hours than doing it manually,” Ward-Ross says.

The right software for the need. Finally, le Roux says, ECVC benefits from having a solid relationship with an organization that specializes in providing software for the rehabilitation industry. “Of all the software products on the market today, Vertex is the one product that most closely meets ECVC’s needs.”



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