



## Mail Management Solutions

### The Organization

### Jostens: Graduating to a Customized, Windows-Based Shipping System

Judicial robes. Mortar boards and tassels. Hoods signifying academic distinction. Such is the stuff that is produced and shipped by the Laurens, South Carolina manufacturing plant owned by Jostens Inc. Jostens is a leading producer of products, programs and services that help people celebrate important moments, recognize achievements and build affiliation. In addition to the graduation products, the company produces year-books, class rings, school photography and achievement awards.

### The Challenge

Todd Smith, a network administrator for Jostens, was appointed to implement a new transportation system in the company's South Carolina plant. Company management recommended Pitney Bowes.


### PB Solution: Ascent

"We already had a customized shipping program in place here, but it was DOS-based, and Jostens wants all applications to run on Windows," says Smith. Corporate managers were convinced that Pitney Bowes was the solution. It wasn't long after their initial meeting with Pitney Bowes representatives that Ascent™, Pitney Bowes' shipping management software, was up and running in five manufacturing plants. A few months later, the system was well on its way to total customization.

Ascent is integrated shipping management software. It is a powerful but simple Windows-based multi-carrier logistics system. Ascent is designed to meet the needs of medium- to high-volume shippers by integrating shipping information and management with users' existing enterprise systems. The software helps maintain low inventories, meet customer demand for swift delivery and manage detailed shipment information. The result: maximized cash flow, productivity and customer responsiveness.

According to Smith, Jostens' Ascent installation went well. "It's user friendly to begin with. And when we began to customize some features, [the] head programmer was very helpful." Smith recommends saving time by starting out with a good working diagram of current shipping processes and forms in use.

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## The Benefits of Ascent

Today, Jostens' South Carolina plant relies on Ascent to process all its shipments, including bulk orders to schools and individual customer orders. "Our shipping volume is about 200,000 packages a year," says Smith. "We use FedEx, UPS, USPS and several LTL carriers." Ascent interfaces easily with Jostens' Oracle business system. "Ascent assigns a freight bill number and then tells our Oracle system what, where and how each package was shipped," says Smith.

Ease of customization is one of Ascent's biggest advantages. Jostens has customized Ascent to track dual shipping rates. Smith explains, "We receive a discount on carrier rates internally and charge a different rate for outgoing product. We use Ascent's reporting feature to track what the carrier is charging us and to track the amount that we charge the customer. It allows us to track our charges versus actual costs." Jostens can use that information to refine budgets, determine profitability and forecast future costs.

Jostens also uses Ascent to track online orders. "Customers can order some of our products online through our Oracle system. When the products are ready to ship, we scan the barcode, and it brings up all the customer information into our Ascent system," says Smith.

Ascent's tracking ability is probably the biggest benefit for Jostens. "We use Ascent to automate the printing of our manifests, but we also use the tracking feature a lot," says Smith. "It's really helped us provide better service while saving time."

While Smith is still working out some details between Ascent and Oracle, he feels the system is close to its final customization. "After six months with the new system, our customer service had improved because of better tracking ability. Once we get our final reports customized, it will be even better," says Smith.

As Jostens heads into another rush season of graduations, shipping personnel have a new reason to feel prepared and positive. And Smith feels confident that if problems should arise, Pitney Bowes will be there to back them up. Says Smith, "[their] help desk has been responsive, and their engineers have always been extremely helpful. We have a better handle on how our shipping operations work now."

## About Pitney Bowes

Pitney Bowes Inc. is a \$4.0 billion global provider of integrated mail and document management solutions headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut. The company serves over 2 million businesses of all sizes in more than 130 countries through dealer and direct operations. The Pitney Bowes Mail Management division, formerly Pitney Bowes TranScape, delivers leading edge, integrated, global solutions that manage the information surrounding the movement of documents and packages for customers of all sizes. Pitney Bowes' growth and success are integrally tied to an exciting, invigorating culture in which innovation, research and development, diversity, community support, and volunteerism are encouraged and rewarded. As a result, the company has been favorably profiled and acknowledged in numerous business-related books and major magazines as being a great place to work and build a career, especially for women and minorities.



10800 Lyndale Avenue South  
Bloomington, MN 55420

1-800-888-6226  
www.supplychain.pb.com

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