



## Streamlining Communication with Castelle FaxPress: A Case Study

### Crown Central Petroleum's Success with the FaxPress Network Fax Server

*Crown Central Petroleum's recently purchased FaxPress 5000 network fax server immediately modernized and automated two of the company's most obsolete, problematic communication channels, and is playing a key role in the updating of a third.*

#### The FaxPress Customer Profile

Crown Central is an independent, east coast marketer of petroleum products. Headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland, the company's petroleum operations include refining, wholesale and retail. Crown Central's 346 Fast Fare<sup>®</sup> convenience store, mini-mart and gasoline station retail outlets are located throughout the mid-Atlantic and southeastern states.

#### The Project

Crown Central Petroleum needed a practical, economic answer to the many problems afflicting their district reporting, maintenance authorization and purchase order processes. Crown Central uses SAP to manage its distribution system for the entire oil and gas value chain from wellhead to service station, but unfortunately SAP's potential could not be fully utilized within the existing system.

Crown Central's existing system was flawed and obsolete, relying on standalone fax machines and manual faxing, as well as the aid of an additional outside printing service. With the Crown Central staff sometimes sending as many as 100 faxes a day, the labor intensive and inefficient nature of manual faxing - not to mention the unnecessary expense of an outside vendor - became all too obvious. The Crown Central Systems Administrator, Ronald Johnson, went in search of a more viable alternative and determined FaxPress would provide an efficient, economic solution in the required areas.

**District Reporting** - Crown Central sends a series of once-a-week SAP-generated reports out to off-site district managers. These reports detail credit and debit history for each retail outlet in the manager's territory. Before their FaxPress purchase, Crown Central paid an outside service to print and send these complete summaries on 3-inch credit card paper tape. The dealers were, understandably, dissatisfied with this method, and rightly so. The format was hard to read, with the credit card paper tape lines only 39 characters wide, electronic storage was next to impossible, requiring exhaustive data entry, and the hard copy records were awkward and hard to organize. At the very least, Johnson wanted a way to send the SAP-generated reports straight to the managers, ideally in a more convenient format, without having to involve an outside service.

**Maintenance Authorization** - Every time a Crown Central gas pump, cash register or light bulb requires repair, the maintenance division at headquarters generates and sends a maintenance request form to the person requesting the repair. Before FaxPress, the department staff had to stop what they were doing to print out a request form, generated by the SAP system, and then manually fax the form via a standalone fax machine. The department processes up to 3,000 requests per month. An employee could spend anywhere from five to ten minutes to process and fax each request—a frustrating waste of time and energy. Johnson, and the frustrated maintenance department, were sure that replacing the office fax machine with a network fax server would make the whole authorization process more efficient, allowing employees to send out the maintenance request forms straight from their desktops, and eliminating the frustrations of manual faxing.

## **The FaxPress Solution: Implementation and Results**

The automation and continuity Johnson was looking for in Crown Central's district reporting and maintenance authorization processes would require FaxPress' integration with SAP. After deploying the FaxPress on the network, a process Johnson describes as "so simple, it left me time to ward off the latest viruses," he turned to Castelle partner and middleware software provider, FabSoft.

FabSoft's Reform software creates and electronically distributes business forms to a printer, digital copier, or fax and email systems. SAP would generate the documents, Reform would take care of formatting the faxes, compiling distribution and passing them to FaxPress, and FaxPress would send them to the specified recipients. The SAP/Reform integration required Johnson to redefine the way SAP generates its reports specifically for Reform, then configure Reform to send the SAP-generated reports to the FaxPress. With SAP, Reform, and FaxPress now forming one continuous communication channel, Crown Central's district reporting and maintenance authorization processes would be seamless and automatic.

**District Reporting** - With FaxPress, the district reports generated by the SAP system are sent by Reform directly to the FaxPress, and automatically faxed to each district manager. In addition to eliminating the need for an outside service provider, FaxPress is also able to provide more services for less money. According to Johnson, "It would cost us up to \$1,000 per month to integrate our fax capability directly into the SAP system with our outside service. With FaxPress, we are able to accommodate all SAP-generated fax reports ourselves, as well as fax-enable the rest of the company." FaxPress also presents the reports in an easily readable format, as well as providing the additional option of electronically storing them.

**Maintenance Authorization** - With the fax automation provided by FaxPress, the results for the maintenance division were, predictably, a great improvement over the old system. With FaxPress, the maintenance department employees simply send the SAP-generated repair request document to Reform - the rest of the process proceeds unattended. Crown Central discovered that using the FaxPress freed at least two maintenance division employees for more productive work. Johnson and the maintenance division staff consider the new system a huge success. "The entire process is so user friendly, we can get in, get it done, get out, and move on to something else really fast!"

Even with the heavy fax volume generated by the district reporting and maintenance repair document load, the company is still using only two of the FaxPress 5000's eight fax lines. With room for expansion, and with FaxPress having proved itself such a ready solution in automating the district reporting and maintenance authorization processes, the company now plans to involve the FaxPress in improving their purchase order process. By automating faxes, Crown Central expects to see major gains in the purchasing department's processing time, vendor communication quality and employee productivity. Johnson expects that, ultimately, FaxPress will be used to fax between 1,000 and 2,000 pages per day – a huge relief to the Crown Central staff. Still, there will be room for expansion: a FaxPress 5000 running all eight lines can handle around 4,000 pages in an eight-hour day.

## **Added Benefits**

The benefits from FaxPress far exceeded Crown Central's expectations. In fax-enabling the desktops of the company's 120 employees, FaxPress allows them to send and receive faxes without ever having to leave their workstations, in less than one tenth of the time they'd spend at the office fax machine. FaxPress interfaces with the company's Nortel Meridian PBX system and uses Dual Tone Multi Frequency (DTMF) routing to recognize each employee's 4-digit extension as part of the fax number. Also, by integrating with the company's Exchange 5.5 mail server, FaxPress allows the Crown Central employees to use Outlook to send documents to both fax and email recipients simultaneously, and delivers faxes right to their Outlook inbox. FaxPress also offers transmission status tracking through a convenient web-based interface, and can even be configured to email a final transmission report on each fax's success or failure.

"This has been a very simple, economical implementation," says Johnson. For the employees, the FaxPress implementation means efficient, error-free document delivery, making their time at work more productive. For Crown Central, the FaxPress implementation is delivering reduced communication costs, accelerated processing time, and more streamlined, higher quality communication – all without ever misplacing a fax.

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