



School photography studio raises efficiency with automated form capture.

Rolland Studios offers a complete range of photographic services for K-12 schools. During its busiest period, Rolland has to photograph 60,000 students in just ten weeks – and deliver customized print packages within two weeks of each shoot. But manual entry of order and pricing data from forms into the company database was slow and error-prone – costing Rolland time and money until ABBYY FlexiCapture® provided a solution that automated the process.

“Data entry used to be a major part of our processes. ABBYY FlexiCapture has completely eliminated it. This really is a “Wow!””

Steve J. Mullally, President, Rolland Studios



About Rolland Studios

Founded in 1933, Rolland Studios is located in Raytown Missouri and specializes in school photography. Providing a wide variety of photographic services for grades K-12, the firm’s commitment to excellent service and building strong working relationships has resulted in long-standing success within Raytown’s business community. Rolland Studios is a member of the Raytown Crossroads Chamber of Commerce, the Photo Marketing Association and the Professional School Photographers Association.

Learn more at
www.rollandstudiosinc.com

Losing productivity to human error

School photography has come a long way since Rolland Studios first opened its doors. Behind every photograph there is now a network of processes dependent on fast and accurate data input. From the time a student’s picture is taken to when their package of prints is delivered, information including name, print sizes, special services and payment details has to be input into a database, correlated and matched to their digital photo.

And according to Rolland’s President Steve Mullally, timeframes are short and the need for efficiency huge: “Between mid-August and November 1st we photograph 60,000 kids and send out a customized package for each one. Plus, we commit to a very fast turnaround on our packages – two weeks from photo shoot to delivery. Manually entering the information for each of those data points was impacting our efficiency and resources.”

Rolland had evolved a system where a barcode was assigned to each digital photo taken onsite, and then associated with a form specifying package options – making it easy to match a JPEG with order information within the database. But as Mr. Mullally describes, “We had to scan in each one of those forms’ codes with a handheld barcode scanner and then manually enter each form’s information into the system. If we made a mistake, for example if the dollar amount didn’t match what we collected at the shoot, we had redo it and that cost us 15 minutes per package – six times the time we are running at today.”

Pursuing a solution to inefficient manual input...

"We knew," says Mullally, "that there had to be a better way. After the actual photography, data entry was the most labor-intensive part of our process and the most inefficient. So we began looking for methods of automating input of the information on our forms."

Much research and a strong recommendation from Rolland's IT consultant led Mullally and his team to identify ABBYY FlexiCapture as their best option: "ABBYY really was the Cadillac choice," says Mullally. "And thanks to a reference from Toshiba Business Solutions we found the right partner for implementation: Ilya Evdokimov from WiseTREND. That's when things really took off."

Reclaiming time and efficiency with ABBYY FlexiCapture

Working with Mullally, Evdokimov formulated the criteria for automating and validating form capture using FlexiCapture. "Mr. Mullally envisioned this as a highly automated process," says Evdokimov, "and in our conversations I could see how the software's flexibility would eliminate most manual processes."

In line with expectations, Evdokimov began configuring FlexiCapture, implementing a series of checks and crosschecks for automatic form validation and correction. "If there were values out of range," explains Evdokimov, "or multiple checkmarks were checked where only one checkmark was needed, FlexiCapture was set to automatically perform corrections, or inform operators – relieving them from the multiple tasks previously required to correct a form. It was also set up to perform database checks and import values from external resources – enabling the amount of data on the form itself to be minimized, thus requiring less capture work, while still providing operators all the necessary data points."

"Just being alerted to mismatches between the dollar amount and the form package is an enormous timesaver," says Mullally. "Having the system flag us is very helpful. If you're talking 15 minutes to correct a mistake, catching them beforehand saves huge amounts of time."

"Our clients are not in the business of data entry," says Evdokimov, "but they still need to do data entry as part of their business. So our goal is to eliminate or at least minimize it, empowering our clients to focus on their core expertise."

The results

According to Mullally, implementing FlexiCapture was fast and straightforward: "From the time we gave Ilya the go-ahead it took one week, start to finish. The solution was installed on a dual quad-core Windows-based Dell PC, and the process was no more complicated than installing Word or any other off-the-shelf Windows product. Ilya then did a walk-through over the phone and we were up and running – we haven't required any support since."

And the result? "Before ABBYY," states Mullally, "we had a person doing data entry full time and it took three to four hours to manually process the forms for each school. Now it's down to between 30 to 40 minutes, only requires one operator on a part-time basis and the accuracy is 100%. Overall it takes 75% less time to get everything done. This really is a "Wow."

"If you're in this business," says Mullally, "you'd be silly not to use this. I highly recommend it. Manual data entry can be a huge time consuming part of the job and this eliminates it. Plus," he adds, "Toshiba Business Solutions and WiseTREND were great and did a tremendous job. It's been everything a business relationship should be."

About WiseTREND

WiseTREND is a premier provider of advanced OCR and Data Capture solution integrations based on award-winning ABBYY technologies. The company was recognized as the "ABBYY Technology Partner of the Year 2013" in North America.

About Toshiba America Business Solutions, Inc.

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The Challenge:

Enable Rolland Studios to replace slow and error-prone manual data entry with automated form processing.

The Result:

Rolland Studios has leveraged ABBYY FlexiCapture to automate the processing of forms – greatly lowering the time it takes to process them and virtually eliminating errors.

*"The accuracy is 100%.
One person can now
handle all the form
processing in a quarter
of the previous time!"*

*Steve J. Mullally
President, Rolland Studios*

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