



Superior Media Solutions LLC

an XTENT Case Study

"Publishing Cloud Solution Provides a Golden Lining"

January 2012 : Superior Media Solutions (SMS) of Lincolnshire, Illinois, USA (www.superiormediasolutions.net) provides a rich range of production solutions for publishers wishing to deliver their content to multiple channels - whilst at the same time needing to reduce their production costs. The challenge faced by every publisher worldwide.

The company uniquely combines an innovative approach to the challenges of publishing in today's digital world together with the experience and support of their clients' staff. SMS states that it offers significant advantages over in-house production and systems, and that the powerful combination of SMS' expertise and the experience of their client's dedicated staff deliver not only significant savings, but a publishing solution that works perfectly to meet today's requirements whilst preparing them for tomorrow's opportunities. A win-win for both parties.

SMS publishing technology is based upon **XTENT**, a flexible multi-channel content management solution developed by Seinet of Madrid, Spain (www.seinet.com) and delivered internationally by New ProImage

(www.new-proimage.com). New ProImage is the partner chosen by Seinet to represent it in North America, Europe and Far East to distribute, commercialize, install and support in those regions **XTENT** and also **XPad**, an Adobe InDesign plugin that enables publishers to create mobile editions quickly and easily.

SMS provides a complete set of services that include digital editions, ads for tablets and mobiles, financial, catalog services and an advertising portal that is fully integrated with **XTENT**.

XTENT is the only solution that integrates document management, publishing management, planning management, production planning and digital output management – and is widely recognized as the most efficient multi-channel publishing solution available today. The company guarantees its customers at least a 20% cost saving.

Prior to making the decision to implement **XTENT**, Robert Brai, one of the SMS founders and chief operating officer, said, “We looked at other platforms, such as K4’s Vjooon, but for us it wasn’t cost effective. We needed to support three offices: California, Cleveland (Ohio) and New York City and it was very important for us to be able to implement a Software as a Service (SaaS) business model in order to maximize our platform margins.



“At the time, **XTENT** was not offered as a SaaS solution so we had a bit of work to do together with Seinet in order to be able provide our clients with a Cloud-based offering.”

Sina Adibi, chief technology officer, SMS, commented, “In other systems such as WoodWing, Dataplan and K4, they have some of the components

within **XTENT**, but they don't have all them. For example, one of the things we found other solutions lacked was a digital asset manager. I was really intrigued and happy with the robust DAM that **XTENT** provided. Another thing was the XML editor. We saw the value in being able to convert all the content into XML, especially now that we are in a very multi-platform publishing environment where content needs to be redistributed to many other devices: tablet, mobile, or the Web. We saw the ability to quickly convert content to XML as a major advantage versus the way it is achieved in other publishing software products."

Adibi added, "Today K4 and WoodWing have the ability to create XML but it is done via an additional plug-in and is not an integral part of the standard platform, so you have to make an additional investment. Usually you have to buy the Adobe Server and the XML Exporter product so there is an additional cost and set-up involved with these other systems. With cost-conscious clients we had to be mindful of our own costs."



Superior Media Solutions provides a Cloud-based publishing services solution based on XTENT Media technology

The Questex Media Group Experience



In 2009, leading B2B publisher and events organiser, Questex Media Group LLC, (www.questex.com) made cuts across a variety of functions in their business due both to the economic slowdown and its decision to expand outsourcing in areas such as production and creative services.

Questex Media CEO and President Kerry Gumas (pictured) said, "Print is under significant pressure and we're doing what we have to do to re-adjust the size of our business. Our view is that this is a fundamental change. We're accelerating downsizing on the print side while continuing to add resources into digital, where we think there's going to be significant growth."

Questex needed a solution whereby at times of lower revenue, costs would be reduced accordingly.

An Agile Business Model

To meet this goal, and after a lot of research, in 2010 Questex selected SMS as their publishing services partner. "By aligning with SMS, we transition our production function to a more agile business model," said Kerry Gumas at the time. "A key consideration that made SMS most attractive to us is their ability to engage many of our existing production personnel to handle our titles."

Executive vice president, Tony D'Avino, added, "Some of our management, editors, designers and production staff took a close look at SMS' Internet-based production technology (**XTENT**). It's a very intuitive platform that offers many efficiencies for designers and editors; for sales and marketing people it can result in later deadlines and the benefit of longer selling cycles

between issues. It will also help us significantly as we look to repurpose and reposition our content for the ever-changing platforms available for today's media consumer."

The plan was to migrate all of its magazines to SMS within only five months. "It was a very aggressive schedule. We integrated 25 magazines into **XTENT** in the Cloud over the course of five months which I found stunning considering that, when I had to implement K4 at my previous company, it took almost nine months to integrate just four titles," said Robert Brai. "ProImage helped us with the training. We created the training based upon the publishing schedules of the magazines so we could identify periods when production would be slow and we'd have some time available - the whole team really deserves a lot of credit."

Previously Questex had a centralized group of production and prepress people employed with a fixed cost of salaries and benefits, IT hardware and software, telecommunication, space, etc.. They wanted, however, a variable cost model so that as pagination went up, when they should have a higher advertising revenue the cost could affordably increase pro-rata, but when the advertising market got soft and the pagination went down, the cost would also go down. The price was therefore agreed at a page rate, where cost moved in line with revenues.

"The risk for us was pretty significant as it was for Questex because this was changing the very core of how they operated - and they had a large staff all of whom had to quickly learn new processes," said Robert Brai. "We consulted with them in terms on how they could improve their existing workflow and based on that we developed the training and templates. They were learning new technology and adapting to a new approval process. SMS staff did a great job in helping them to manage these changes."

“Beyond technology we provide Questex with paper purchasing and inventory management services, and have people who help them making sure that the entire process works well. It’s a layer on top of technology to make sure that production runs smoothly.

“Because we provide an ongoing service we have to make doubly sure that clients are 100% satisfied, all of the time. We are almost there. We have accomplished a lot but I think only now the publisher is beginning to realize the benefit of XML and we are working on the integration of **XTENT** created XML with Drupal and Wordpress open source CMS and blog engines.”

Questex production workflow – BEFORE SMS

The process prior to working with SMS and implementing **XTENT** was very centralized with little collaboration. Questex had editors and designers working in three different office locations. They would create their pages in InDesign – and without the benefit of a Content Management System they had no ability to remotely preview pages as they were being completed, or to see those pages as they would appear in the magazine. They had these isolated offices, silos that didn’t talk with each other, and all the data (images, ads, InDesign files) was saved in a file server environment with no capability to search for assets, nor for people to easily share the work in progress.

One of the technical considerations was the requirement to share the huge volumes of data (advertising files, photos, Illustrator files, Photoshop files, PDFs etc.). This meant they needed a robust and fault-tolerant communications infrastructure was needed, and it was duly implemented.

A key problem that **XTENT** solved for Questex was the previous lack of ability to see the status and location of work in progress. The managing editors didn’t know which pages had been completed. They couldn’t see previews of the pages until the pages were run through the prepress

department. They were creating hard proofs that were being shipped throughout the country. So managing editors and designers had to wait until the hard proofs arrived their offices. All this caused significant cost and delay. By using **XTENT** the problem no longer existed.

Questex production workflow – TODAY

Now the workflow has changed dramatically. There are 70 users split between SMS and Questex connected to the system. There is powerful automation and production control built-in. Automation can be triggered as the status of a page changes. For example, when a page changes to “*final PDF*” **XTENT** takes the file, performs pre-flight and color management using PitStop and creates the PDF for the printer. This all used to be a manual process.

The digital edition PDF, which is different to the print PDF, is also automatically processed with a status change. “We have also created an email status so that managing editors know when pages are ready for review,” says Sina Adibi. “We have produced a lot of automation within the status space workflow so that when someone does something, everyone knows.

“The former Questex production and prepress group now work for SMS. In their former production area they had people manually pre-fighting files, manually creating PDFs and sending those PDFs by email to designers and editors. Now the designers and editors can go to the flat plan and see the pages for themselves, immediately. This has saved around \$75,000 per annum. They don’t need to get a PDF, although they have the option within **XTENT** to create one if they wish. We have totally eliminated the need, expense and manual tasks of creating hard copy proofs and shipping proofs to and fro,” adds Adibi. “Automation within **XTENT** is a major reason why we are able to do all this work with less people.”

Seinet has incorporated some very powerful features within **XTENT**. The solution empowers people, whether they are freelancers working from home or office-based staff, to collaborate on any publishing project and for everyone to be able to see the pages, the work in progress, and the status of the project at any point in time. Also, through the XML Editor, an editor without a copy of InDesign, can see all the copy that is associated with an article, and its attached images. They have control over tagging and styling, and are also able to see the page as it would be represented in the InDesign file. In addition, the completely integrated flat plan and digital asset management capabilities increases production efficiency.

Rick Shafranek, vice president sales and marketing, New ProImage America, states, "We are delighted that SMS selected **XTENT** as its technology foundation. This innovative company provides a great new and cost-effective production service for magazine, directory and catalogue publishers. Together we are trying to help mid-size publishers reduce cost and become more efficient, and to focus on their core business. Publishing using **XTENT** in the Cloud is the perfect way ahead for many. We believe it truly is superior – and the Cloud with a golden lining."

AT A GLANCE:**Savings made by Questex include:**

- reduced office rental cost due to less space required for staff, systems and servers
- halved production personnel
- reduced data communications cost
- proofing, paper and shipping reduced by \$75,000
- reduced power cost

In total an approximate \$250,000 USD per annum reduction in Questex's costs has been made by its partnership with SMS.

Questex publications include *American Spa, American Salon, Travel Agent, Hotel & Motel Management, Hotel Design, Home Media, Nightclub & Bar, Pest Management Professional, Landscape Management, Golfdom, Pit & Quarry, LPGas*, among others.

About Seinet

SEINET is a private, independent corporation staffed by professionals specialized in providing publishing solutions. Specialized developers and technology consultants make up 70% of the team. Our mission is to optimize cross-media management and for this purpose relies on two leading products: XTENT, a complete Content Manager Solution, and XPAD, our Tablet Publishing Solution. Seinet may be found on the Web at: www.seignet.com

About Superior Media Solutions

Our clients hire us for our publishing experience, affordability, web based solutions and ease of implementation. Using our solution, our clients reduce their costs and increase their revenue opportunities. For more information, visit www.superiormediasolutions.net.

About New ProImage

First established in 1995, New ProImage is a leading developer of browser-based content management, digital workflow, ink optimization, color image

processing and production tracking solutions for the commercial and newspaper printing and publishing industries. Using a standard Internet browser ProImage's advanced workflow technologies offer the printing industry flexible and feature-rich end-to-end communications, workflow management, color processing and production tracking solutions. New ProImage Limited is headquartered in Netanya, Israel, twenty miles north of Tel Aviv. The company manages sales and support from offices in the Americas from Princeton, New Jersey, in Europe from London, UK, and in Asia from Israel. The company may be found on the Web at: www.new-proimage.com.

About Questex Media Group LLC.

Questex Media Group LLC is a global, diversified business-to-business media organization serving multiple industries including hotel and hospitality, travel, technology, beauty, spa, among numerous other specialty industries with its well-established market-leading events, publications, digital and interactive media, research, and other marketing and media related services. For more information, visit: www.questex.com.

Contacts:

Questex LLC:

Michelle Mitchell
Tel: 216-706-3733
Email: mmitchell@questex.com

Superior Media Solutions:

Bill Walker, CEO
Tel: 312-961-7521
Email: bill@superiormediasolutions.net

New ProImage America, Inc.:

Rick Shafranek, VP sales and marketing
Tel: 919-303-5637
Email: rick.shafranek@new-proimage.com