



“AutoFORM Gives us a Document Quality that Matches Our Image as World Class Designers.”

Overview

■ Challenge

To ensure that account statements, order confirmation forms, delivery notes, invoices and so on are just as attractive as Portmeirion's products and other marketing materials

■ IT Applications

SSA BPCS

■ Solution

AutoFORM design software
AutoFORM GUI mapping interface
AutoFORM email distribution
AutoFORM Archive (pending)

■ Why AutoFORM?

Extremely easy to use, whilst offering powerful data extraction and manipulation facilities

■ Is it For You?

AutoFORM is suitable for all companies using ERP and other IT solutions where you are need to improve document appearance. Added benefits are the ability to distribute documents by email and web-enabled online document archive storage and viewing facilities.

AutoFORM is compatible with all IT platforms and applications and can drive any combination of printers including lasers, matrix and thermal barcode printers.



Portmeirion is a highly successful, export orientated English ceramics manufacturer with an unrivalled reputation for innovative design. With offices and sales outlets all over the world the group has shown consistently strong growth over the years. From a turnover of £9.8 million in 1988, when the company was first floated on the London Stock Exchange, sales are now in the region of £30 million p.a. and continues to grow.

Portmeirion products are created by some of England's finest designers, whose common ethos is to create everyday objects as works of art, heralded with their sales motto *"quality by design for life."*

With design being central to its marketing strategy, Portmeirion not only sets high standards for the design quality of its products, but also for their marketing materials. This includes the business documents that Portmeirion send to their customers.

Standard BPCS Reports are Generally Poor Quality

Portmeirion BPCS IT Manager Simon Brayford comments: "While we are extremely pleased with the functionality of our BPCS system, generally the print quality of the standard BPCS reports is too poor for our needs. BPCS reports rely heavily on the use of expensive pre-printed stationery to add the design elements such as logos and text box outlines.

Output Management Without Programming

Brayford continues: "But trying to improve the output appearance using BPCS coding is a specialist and therefore expensive assignment and we really didn't want to have to call in a programmer every time we wanted to change our output.

Output & Document Management

Easy to Learn

"With AutoFORM on board we can manage all our BPCS output ourselves", says Simon Brayford. AutoFORM's drag & drop data mapping tools and WYSIWYG windows interface are very easy to use and enable us to quickly produce new documents or make changes in a fraction of the time that it would take us to remap BPCS using traditional programming techniques. Brayford added: "AutoFORM has many powerful functions, but despite this I learned how to use it quite quickly."

Quick and Genuinely Competent Support

Portmeirion has therefore not needed a great deal of support from AutoFORM, but on the rare occasions when they have called for help, the company has received it right away:

"When we call AutoFORM we always get quick and genuinely competent service. If there are problems, they get solved. We have never felt left in the lurch."

The Most Beneficial AutoFORM Features:

Repagination

Brayford comments: "One of the largest cost savings achieved with AutoFORM is the repagination of order acknowledgements and invoices. As our orders are for typically for a large number of items, we were very restricted by the fixed number of lines per page that BPCS gives, which meant that many of our documents ran into more pages than were absolutely necessary. However, trying to resolve this problem using BPCS coding was quite a complex task.

AutoFORM made it simple. The repagination facility captures the BPCS print stream and conditionally recalculates the location of the page breaks according to the volume of data. In this way output is automatically mapped into a front page, continuation pages and a final page overlay. In addition, AutoFORM offers a number of other features that help to reduce the length of documents whilst making them easier to read and handle.

Other Repagination Facilities

- Automatic blank line suppression & word wrap
- Font size manipulation: product description headers can be emboldened and ancillary data printed one or two font sizes smaller
- Automatically prints a summary page at the front or at the top of multi-page documents.
- Automatic sequence page numbering e.g. 1 of 3

"The reduction of the number of changes has led to dramatic reduction in paper, toner and handling costs. One of our documents literally went down from a typical 25 to 5 pages."

Powerful Data Extraction & Manipulation Tools

A common feature with most standard BPCS reports is that they do not necessarily contain all the information you need. AutoFORM provides JavaScript based tools whereby you can conditionally collect data from any of the BPCS or other databases and inserts it into the report. Portmeirion have found extremely useful to add contact names and direct line telephone numbers to order acknowledgements which helps our customers communicate with us in the event of a query. They also use to manage the conversion of a single print file to be formatted for international number formats, for example a thousand is printed as 1,000.00 or 1.000,00, as appropriate to the customer. "All in all AutoFORM helps us make those small changes that help to improve document clarity and readability," says Brayford.

Documents Also Sent by Email

Until now Portmeirion have used traditional print & post for all their document deliveries. However, they have recently installed AutoFORM E-mail, which enables any document to be converted to a PDF format and automatically sent attached to an email.

"What is good about AutoFORM is that it selects the most appropriate route for the customer. So if one customer would like postal delivery and another email, AutoFORM will select the right route, without further operator intervention. Even if we only persuade a fraction of our customers to accept email delivery, we anticipate considerable cost savings."

Online Document Viewing

We are currently reviewing AutoFORM Archive, which encompasses both scanning and COLD document archiving. Not only will this save us the time and expense of printing, circulating and storing paper documents we will have instant access to information. This will enable our staff to make faster more informed decisions and to resolve customer-supplier queries within one phone call.

"With AutoFORM on board we can manage all our BPCS output ourselves"

Simon Brayford

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