

Everglades Direct

Everglades Direct, Inc. is a privately owned subsidiary of Taylor Corporation specializing in business-to-business direct marketing, sales, service and fulfillment. The company serves human resources and compliance needs of over a million businesses across the United States through products such as forms, labor law posters, training resources, corporate greeting cards, award and recognition items, compliance kits, software and more. Everglades Direct sells through multiple brands such as HR Direct, G Neil and others.

Taylor Corporation is one of the top ten graphics communications companies in North America, providing interactive, print and marketing solutions used by Fortune 100 companies as well as office supply and consumer retailers.



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Susan Drenning
President, Everglades Direct

Everglades Direct goals:

- Differentiate from the competition by establishing an infrastructure to enable increasing levels of product and service personalization
- Reduce the time and cost required to develop and maintain personalization processes for different offerings
- Support a growing online presence, as well as inside customer service ordering processes
- Integrate with core business systems to streamline fulfillment of custom products

BuyDesign capabilities:

- BuyDesign Product Configurator
- Standard integration with Microsoft Dynamics AX
- Integration with e-commerce system and output generation tools

Results to date:

- Multiple custom-developed tools for different products replaced by single product configuration engine
- BuyDesign deployed within both Microsoft Dynamics AX and Everglades' e-commerce system
- Customer service training requirements reduced, enabling more flexible seasonal staffing
- Order turn-around time accelerated while further improving order quality
- Everglades positioned to rapidly and cost-effectively introduce more personalized product lines

Challenge

HR departments and other corporate customers want personalized printed and engraved products, along with fast turn-around and high quality. And they increasingly want to design, visualize and order those products online themselves.

Everglades Direct (Everglades) had been offering more and more customized solutions, but was finding that they needed to develop new in-house software tools each time they introduced a new product and modify that software every time they made product changes. That was becoming expensive and added excessive lead time to new product introduction.

In addition, Everglades wanted to significantly increase the company's online presence with a new generation e-commerce system that would, among other things, include intuitive self-service product design and ordering capabilities that customers could do themselves. It was important that this customer-facing capability have the intelligence and visualization built in to make the process as mistake-proof as possible and ensure the customer would be happy with their order when they received it.



Why TDCI's BuyDesign?

Everglades chose TDCI's BuyDesign Configurator for a number of important reasons, mainly because:

- BuyDesign has the power and flexibility to handle the wide range of different products and services Everglades offers today and wants to offer in the future – without the need for custom program development.
- BuyDesign's open architecture enables them to deploy a single product configuration engine that works with all of their major business systems and custom tools, including:
 - Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP
 - A new-generation e-commerce system
 - Sophisticated personalization layout generation software
- TDCI had the proven ability to provide high quality support as indicated by the fact that TDCI was highly recommended by Everglades' Microsoft Dynamics solution provider and had been nominated as a Microsoft ISV Partner of the Year multiple times.

"We selected BuyDesign because it gives us three big advantages in addition to making order specification faster and easier," said Marty Hawkins, Everglades Director of Information Technologies.

"First, it was easy to integrate BuyDesign with our automated layout generator, enabling us to quickly and fully leverage that existing technology. Second, it gave us immediate ROI by enabling us to utilize the exact same configuration engine in both our order entry process and our e-commerce site – that completely eliminated the need to invest in a separate online solution and allowed us to maintain a single set of product models to drive both applications. Third, it enabled us to put definition of the rules and constraints in the hands of our Product Management team with little support from IT. All of those points reduce our cost while making us more agile in terms of introducing new products and product options to drive sales."

Results

Everglades is now operational with BuyDesign in both Microsoft Dynamics AX and the Everglades ecommerce system for a number of different products. It is an integral part of Everglades' overall infrastructure for product and service personalization.

It supports inside customer service personnel who specify, quote and place orders while on the phone with customers and drives self-service customer design, visualization and ordering via Everglades' web sites.

BuyDesign guides users through selection and placement of text, as well as options for materials, colors, fonts, etc. It notifies the user of potential problems and allows only valid combinations. It works with Everglades' layout software to provide immediate visualization for order confirmation and once the order is placed, it generates manufacturing information to speed production and fulfillment.

Susan Drenning, Everglades Direct President states part of the importance to Everglades: "The improved personalization flow and on-screen proofing capabilities delivered through BuyDesign significantly reduce training times and the level of technical expertise required. This enables our business to staff more efficiently for seasonal peaks in customer service and order processing. We're also very happy with how it enables customers to order directly on our website. These capabilities are important to our plans for growing the business."

Gail Bourbeau, Everglades Director of Customer Service, adds a hands-on perspective: "BuyDesign is very user friendly. It's easy to navigate with clear step-by-step directions and automatically includes any special charges. Most importantly, the agent or customer can see exactly what the piece looks like right away. Any mistakes can be caught and fixed immediately."

Hawkins summarizes from an IT perspective: "With BuyDesign and our other tools, we now have an infrastructure that allows us to rapidly introduce and cost-effectively support more personalized products and services. That gives us the ability to increasingly differentiate what we offer from the competition while at the same time reducing our costs."