



Business Advantage®

A Magical Relationship

How Magic Springs Water and Theme Park uses Staples Business Advantage to coast through its busy season.

CHALLENGE

Magic Springs Water and Theme Park needed a facilities partner to help them find the best janitorial products at competitive prices.

SOLUTION

The park partnered with Staples Business Advantage to consolidate ordering, choose the best products for the job and even install the most efficient dispensers.

RESULT

Magic Springs reduced overall facilities costs and ordering time and found a long-term partner in Staples Business Advantage.



Challenge

When Justine Storrie took over as operations manager at Magic Springs Water and Theme Park in Hot Springs, Ark., she inherited 170 employees, 7 restrooms, 90 restroom stalls, and the responsibility of keeping Arkansas' favorite family attraction clean and safe for visitors.

The job came with significant challenges: a roster of products that she had not chosen, supply costs that were higher than she preferred, and an ordering process that could take up her whole day if she let it. Storrie wanted to make sure she was using the best products and getting them at the best prices. She knew that managing facilities for the park would mean expecting the unexpected—and to do that, she needed not just a great vendor, but a great partner.

She got bids from a number of companies, but no one impressed her as much as Staples Business Advantage.

Solution

During the bid process and beyond, Storrie worked closely with her account manager Patrick at Staples Business Advantage.

"He came out and showed me how much Staples Business Advantage actually does—their products and services."

Patrick helped Storrie choose the right products for the park, but there was one category that she just wasn't sure about; she didn't know which paper and soap dispensers would be most effective in the park, or how she was going to handle the install. "Together we chose the products that we thought would be right for me, that fit best with my capacity and price options," said Storrie. "Then Staples Business Advantage sent me some samples and let me try them out."

The opportunity to test the dispensers and products made Storrie's decision an easy one. And then once she chose her products and dispensers, her apprehension about the install evaporated when Staples Business Advantage sent a team to take out all the old dispensers and install the new ones, free of charge.

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Magic Springs Water and Theme Park

Continued from front

“When I was making the decision to switch, we wondered how we would handle the installation of the dispensers,” she said. “But Staples Business Advantage took care of it.”

Storrie has also been able to consolidate ordering for the four departments she manages—a huge time savings, especially since she can manage everything through one login.

“As I became more familiar with Staples Business Advantage, I realized just how much they had,” she said. “Finding out that they have pretty much all of the supplies I use in case I run out and need something fast was pretty awesome. Even if I think, I can’t imagine they’ll carry this—if they can’t find it, they’ll tell me where I can look.”

Among the unexpected products Storrie has been able to add to her Staples Business Advantage orders: first aid supplies, floor mats, key chains, landscaping and gardening tools, and pens. (“Ride operations, first aid department and base command—apparently they all need pens.”)

Result

The Staples Business Advantage team has provided ongoing guidance and product information. This ongoing support became especially important a year after the install when new Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) standards went into effect, and Storrie realized she had some compliance issues.

She called Staples Business Advantage to talk about choosing new ADA-compliant dispensers.

“They knew what to do, what to suggest, and about a week after that first call, they were at the property installing the new dispensers,” she said. “It went so smoothly.”

With Staples Business Advantage, Storrie hasn’t just hired a vendor, she’s found a partner. With round the clock customer support, a powerful and user-friendly website, and a huge array of quality products at competitive prices, Staples Business Advantage helps Storrie successfully keep Magic Springs Water and Theme Park and its 7 sets of restrooms clean, inviting, and useful for the park’s visitors, even during the park’s busy peak season.

“I switched over to Staples Business Advantage and haven’t used anyone else since,” she said.

To learn more, please visit [StaplesAdvantage.com](https://www.staplesadvantage.com).

90

restroom stalls the Magic Springs cleaning crew must maintain.

170

total employees on the Magic Springs operations crew.

223

cases of paper towels Magic Springs went through last year.

“I met with Patrick, who is now my account manager. He came out and showed me how much Staples Business Advantage actually does—their products and services. I switched over and haven’t used anyone else since.”

*Justine Storrie,
Operations Manager,
Magic Springs*

Company at a Glance

Magic Springs Water and Theme Park

OVERVIEW:

Theme park, water park, and concert venue in Hot Springs, Ark., fifty miles from Little Rock.

KEY FACTS:

- Janitorial staff includes three supervisors overseeing a staff of 20
- The park has seven sets of restrooms comprising 90 stalls in its public guest areas
- During the peak season, Storrie orders 10-12 cases/week each of toilet paper, paper towels, and trash bags

WEBSITE: www.magicsprings.com



CHALLENGE

For years, Genplex sought a way to reduce its shipping costs without sacrificing the quality of its all-important shipments to customers.

SOLUTION

After talking with a Staples expert, Genplex made a single switch in its packing tape and saw immediate results.

RESULT

A significant cost savings from both lower product cost as well as more efficient shipping processes.

When you operate a manufacturing business in rural Maine, shipping is a lifeline to your customers. Duane Colford knows this well, and is always looking for ways to improve his company's shipping. But for a decade, there was one challenge he couldn't quite overcome.

Colford is the founder of Genplex Custom Plastic Extrusions, a 12-person manufacturing firm based in Skowhegan, Maine, a town of 8,600 residents. Like any business leader, Colford is always looking to make his business more efficient and shipping is always front and center. The company averages two daily shipments of products and prototypes to customers across the U.S. and in some foreign markets.

The Challenge

Shipping is never routine for Genplex because of the particular sizes and shapes of the products the company ships. The company's made-to-order plastic tubes (some eight feet long) and other plastic, polycarbonate and rubber pieces are produced in irregular shapes to meet customers' specifications. All of these products require specific boxes that are taped shut for secure shipping and in many cases stacked on pallets. Colford's team uses specific box sizes and processes so customers receiving a shipment can make immediate use of the products, such as displaying them on shelves.

But among all of those concerns, the tape used to secure the boxes was the longest sticking point for Colford. "We've had an ongoing issue for over 10 years with tape," Colford says. The company had been using a plastic tape from Germany that was superior in performance to others Genplex had tried, but it was costly. "Historically we'd buy the expensive, high-end tape because we knew it won't break, and it

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comes off the roll easily, so it's more consistent," he says. And for a long time Colford felt it was the only option and continued to pay the high price. Then he met Clyde Hodgkin, an Account Representative for Staples Business Advantage®.

The Solution

When Colford mentioned to Hodgkin the concern about the cost of tape, Hodgkin quickly determined that a small change could make a major difference. By using reinforced paper tape as an alternative to plastic tape, Genplex could cut its expense line for tape by half, saving thousands of dollars a year. And the kicker is, the switch ended up improving the shipping process, according to Colford.

But not only did Hodgkin suggest a new type of tape to improve Genplex's shipping processes, he also pointed the company to a new tape dispenser from Better Packages Inc. that would further streamline shipping. Colford researched the product, made some calculations and confirmed there were more savings Genplex could realize. While researching the new dispenser, he also noticed that it enjoyed a number of showcase customers and watched several demos online of how the dispenser works. These factors along with Hodgkin's recommendation gave Colford confidence to try the new dispenser.

And when a few employees mentioned that the adhesive from the new tape tended to stick on their hands, Hodgkin had the answer again. He demonstrated that the adhesive was water soluble and washed off easily. After that, everyone on the Genplex team agreed that using the Better Packages dispenser was more efficient. It has easy-to-use buttons, and users can operate it to get the precise lengths of tape they need for any box they're preparing to ship. The adhesive quality is also stronger than the plastic tape Genplex used for years.

"The tape looks neater, too," Colford says. "In fact, we are already looking at getting a second dispenser here so we can have one for brown tape and one for white tape on boxes."

The Benefits

Better shipping means better customer relationships, a big benefit for a company like Genplex that values the relationships with its customers and is willing to make the

66%

Amount Genplex was able to reduce its packaging tape costs with a single product switch

25%

Amount Genplex saved by switching vendors for shipping labels

35M

Number of small tubes one specific Genplex customer orders each year

investments necessary to meet their needs. And today Genplex truly appreciates the relationship it has established with Staples Business Advantage. After learning about the opportunity to improve the cost effectiveness and quality of his packing and shipping process, Colford says he continues to think of other ways for his Staples Business Advantage representative to help his business.

In fact, Colford and Hodgkin collaborated to find a more cost-effective solution for shipping labels. When Colford asked for a quote, Hodgkins came back with good news: Staples Business Advantage was able to get Genplex their existing labels at a 25 percent discount.

"Having Clyde coming in here had led us to look at other items that we purchase that he can help us with," Colford says.

Company at a Glance

Genplex Custom Plastic Extrusions

Overview: Manufacturer of plastic, polycarbonate and rubber tube products, as well as custom plastic extrusions for a range of industries around the globe.

Key Facts

- Based in Skowhegan, Maine
- Founded in 1993 by Duane Colford
- 12 employees

Website: www.genplex.com

Ready for Class

Visions In Education learns to make procurement more efficient and less costly.



CHALLENGE

Visions In Education's ordering system had too many manual steps, delaying delivery of needed supplies to students and their families.

SOLUTION

Worked with Staples Business Advantage to develop a purchasing hub that streamlined the process for vendor orders and payments.

RESULT

Significant savings in time for both students' families and money for Visions In Education's operations team.

The back-to-school season is time for families to pick up all the supplies their students need for a good start to the academic year.

For Visions In Education, a K-12 public charter school in Northern California, that task takes on a heightened importance. Because Visions In Education educates pupils who are either home schooled or taking independent study, families need delivery on everything from the right textbooks to pencils. There are no supply closets for teachers to access for an extra book or pen.

The task of coordinating those purchases for 5,300 students in kindergarten through high school falls to Tom Tafoya's team.

The Challenge

When Tafoya, Director of Business and Technology at Visions In Education, thinks back to the start of the school year in 2014, he remembers the challenge of matching higher order volumes with the school's rapid growth.

Like many organizations that encounter procurement bottlenecks, Tafoya's team found itself facing seasonal crunches. The five-member team had to work overtime and hire temporary workers to handle peaks prior to the fall and spring semesters.

Tafoya sought to make improvements by moving some of the purchasing process online so that families could fill out their lists of items to purchase, but school staff needed to review each student's list, ensuring they met budget guidelines. Tafoya's team then had to enter purchase orders at each vendor's website, including Staples Business Advantage, as well as textbook publishers and hundreds of other suppliers. After each purchase went through, the team had to process thousands of invoices as each student might have supplies from several vendors.

On average, it took 10 days to process student orders for curriculum, supplies and services. As a result, not everyone received their materials by the first day of school. "Families would be upset with us because we could not get orders processed in a timely manner," Tafoya says.

The Solution

Tafoya and his team were familiar with Staples Business Advantage as an office supplies vendor, but it wasn't until Tafoya attended a charter school conference that he learned about

the company's work with a seat-based school district to set up an online portal with direct links between the school and vendors' systems.

Tafoya says he sought meetings with other companies in the past looking for answers. Some offered a partial solution and others were not enthusiastic about working with a nonprofit organization's budget limitations. In Matthew Taylor, a Staples Business Advantage representative, Tafoya says Visions In Education found a receptive ear.

Their conversations led to Visions In Education's IT team working with Staples Business Advantage for several months starting in April 2015. Together, they worked to add a new purchasing hub tool to the Visions In Education online system that families could use to order supplies. Behind the scenes, school and vendor procurement systems took advantage of a technology communications protocol called commercial extensible markup language (cXML) to connect seamlessly.

Tafoya says he had to overcome some initial doubts from his programming team that Staples Business Advantage, a brand they knew as an office supplies vendor, could handle this type of IT-heavy integration project. "There was some skepticism on their part because it was cutting edge technology," Tafoya says. "I said, 'That's fine. You guys can figure it out. They're going to help us.'"

Indeed, the procurement hub was up and running in time for the spring ordering crunch. The ordering section of the school's student information system which promotes the use of procurement partners including Staples Business Advantage and other brands. Clicking on a vendor takes the user directly to a special web page where a family can enter their order. The system transmits each student's purchase list to Visions In Education for review and approval. After an order is approved, the system deducts the proper amount from the student's supplies budget and the delivery is on its way. And Tafoya's team has only one invoice to pay for each of its main vendors each month.

The Benefits

Tafoya says the payoff from the procurement hub has been dramatic. The new cXML technology has greatly simplified the ordering process for families. Previously, families had to go to vendor sites and manually copy product numbers, descriptions, and prices. They then had to go back to the Visions In Education ordering site and enter this information directly into the online ordering system. Now, it is a one click process for families. They can create a shopping cart from Staples Business Advantage and submit it directly.

Orders that once took up to 10 days on average to be processed now take four. The new system is less costly to run, too. As a result of this new technology integration, the school was able to reduce the order processing staff from five to four and get through the fall enrollment season with far less overtime and fewer temporary workers to handle the rush periods.

There are also hundreds of fewer invoices for the accounting team to process. Electronic invoices mean major vendors like Staples Business Advantage process one invoice for the school each month. That means the accounting team is doing less accounts payable processing and can focus on more meaningful tasks.

Since the procurement project, Visions In Education has found itself doing business with Staples Business Advantage in other areas. They now provide the school with everything from laptops and flat panel monitors to custodial supplies.

Tafoya credits the team at Staples Business Advantage with getting his organization on a better trajectory. After the IT group began working on the procurement integration project, things took off. "They recognized what we were trying to do and they were able to make it work," says Tafoya.

6

Days on average removed from delivery times of school supplies to students (reduction from 10 to 4)

50%

Reduction in staff overtime and temporary workers to manage peak times for orders

5,300

Students served by Visions in Education

Company at a Glance

Visions In Education

Overview:

Accredited California public charter school that serves home-schooled students in elementary through secondary school, as well as high school students pursuing independent study and college preparatory programs.

Key Facts:

- Based in Carmichael, Calif.
- Founded in 1999
- Serves students in kindergarten through grade 12 in six Northern California counties