

ROBOT STOCKS STAPLES® WITH AUTOMATION SUPPLIES

Since opening its first store in 1986, Staples, Inc. has saved countless hours for people equipping their businesses and home offices. Now an industry giant, the \$25 billion company relies on Robot products to administer systems controlling 2,300 stores and more than 100 warehouse fulfillment centers in 20 countries. Using Robot/SCHEDULE, Robot/NETWORK, Robot/CONSOLE, Robot/ALERT, and Robot/REPLAY, Staples runs its management applications, warehouse management systems, and retail services including payments, credit card authorization, and inventory. Their Canadian brand and European business also rely on them.

"That system wasn't always so smooth," says Ed Guevara, Senior Manager for the i platform at Staples. Before automating with Robot several years ago, operators at Staples ran everything with an "operations run book," a multi-page schedule of activities to execute daily for each partition.

"We're able to do more important work than just looking around the system and typing commands all day long."

Today, Ed says, their Global Operations Center can monitor all platforms, escalating complicated tickets and managing easier jobs. That lets his team focus on managing architecture, new systems, adding hardware to the OS, and advanced troubleshooting. "We're able to do more important work than just looking around the system and typing commands all day long," Ed says.

LESS TICKETS AND ALERTS

Automation has given Ed's team a distinct edge in handling tickets. The ability of Robot/CONSOLE to use OPAL™ (Operator Assistance Language™) within message sets allows his staff to automate virtually any message, reducing the number of tickets for operations staff. The Robot suite also allows them to monitor systems with less interruption. "All of our intelligence is built on Robot/CONSOLE, Robot/ALERT, and Robot/SCHEDULE. Combined, they make sure we don't hear from the systems when everything is running well."

AT A GLANCE

Industry

Retail Office Supply

Business Challenges

- Running everything with manual "operations run book" kept staff from more important work
- Manual messaging slowed handling of tickets
- System-wide changes had to be made in each partition
- Accrued big outages when full job tables went unnoticed

Solution

Robot/SCHEDULE®
Robot/CONSOLE®
Robot/NETWORK®
Robot/ALERT®

Business Results

- Staff has time to focus on more complicated tickets
- Staff can automate virtually any message
- Staff can make changes across all partitions
- Staff finds problems early and avoids unnecessary upgrades

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"Robot lets me sleep at night," Ed says. "And it lets our team focus on other projects. So as much as we can automate, we do."

MORE CONTROL

With Robot/NETWORK, Ed's team has been able to take an unprecedented level of control across the enterprise. "Today we can use Robot/NETWORK to populate standard message sets," he said. "When we make a change to message or process automation that we want across all of our systems, we can do that using product masters. Before we had to sign onto each partition—and we have 34 partitions. Now all you have to do is log on to the host and make the change, and it's done across all environments."

Robot/NETWORK has also given them a better handle on system hardware. "In the past, we accrued a couple of big outages because we ran out of job tables," Ed says. "We used to get to problems so late that by the time we identified the problem, it was too late to address." Most of the time, he says, it was a performance problem resulting from inefficiently written applications.

"We learned our lessons from not monitoring close enough. Now we use Robot/SCHEDULE, which lets us know when the job tables are more than 75 percent used. By automating and watching these issues, we find problems early and avoid unnecessary hardware upgrades."

He adds, "We don't throw money at problems anymore."

ROI BUSINESS-WIDE

The benefit to Staples IT has been clear. But from training to compliance, automation has also increased value across the business.

"For compliance—our main pieces are Sarbanes-Oxley, PCI, and the Massachusetts privacy law—we rely primarily on

Robot/SCHEDULE," Ed says, which gives Staples an audit trail of changes on production jobs. When auditors call, they can look at the Robot/SCHEDULE-automated report and pick a sample, with Ed's team having only to find the associated request. "We avoid having them going in to the change ticket system, picking a change, and going through that process."

The support-intensive process of training call center employees has also seen a boost from automation. New employees often forget their passwords, and enabling accounts after multiple failed logins used to involve fielding calls several times per day. With message automation, the enterprise security team is notified right away. "That saves us time and it saves time across the business," Ed says.

"A HUGE DIFFERENTIATOR"

Since joining Staples in 2005, Ed has worked with Help/Systems on several enhancements and on product support. He says the respect and quality of service in the relationship is "a huge differentiator."

"Whenever we have a request or an enhancement opportunity, Help/Systems not only listens to us but brings a team of experts to hear us out. They are one of the few vendors we deal with that seems to crave our feedback. And I have said it before and I will say it again, the fact that we get a live person every single time we call for support is one of the biggest assets of the Robot products. It is exemplary."

For More Information

Call us at **1-800-328-1000** or email info@helpsystems.com to set up a personal consultation. We'll review your current setup and see how the Robot products can help you achieve your automation goals.

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