

# IMS/21<sup>®</sup> AND AVERITT EXPRESS

FREIGHT AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT



VIEW IT,

SCANNED IMAGES

*Mine it,*

STORE IT,

*Find it...*

Instantly.

COLD

Share it

Documents

Faxes



# FREIGHT AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT

## VANGUARD SYSTEMS BRINGS COMPREHENSIVE INFORMATION AUTOMATION TO AVERITT

### *As seen in Midrange Technology Showcase*

Successful companies learn from their experiences. Averitt Express ([www.averittexpress.com](http://www.averittexpress.com)) is the image of success. The do-all freight firm, with a network of routes stretching from Toronto to El Paso, is rapidly growing. By late 2000, 50,000 direct points enjoyed unusually high customer satisfaction delivered by 80 service centers in the United States. International service reached 300 worldwide destinations.

To sustain its growth, Averitt management looks to the judicious use of new technology, building upon its experience. Recognizing the pivotal role of documents (bills of lading, proofs of delivery, invoices, etc.) in freight services, Averitt invested early in document imaging, installing IBM's ImagePlus® system in 1993. When the time came to upgrade, Averitt drew upon its experience to improve its document/content technology.

### **Traffic Jam in Document Retrieval**

At its Cookeville, TN headquarters, Averitt's staff scanned bills of lading and proofs of delivery or received faxes, and they printed invoices with AFP for output. Barcodes provided the indexing. While the performance of ImagePlus was acceptable at first, storage was mostly on optical disks, and that proved a stumbling block. "We had eight days worth of documents on DASD (magnetic storage)," recalls David Glenn, imaging system support specialist, "but 90 percent of our retrievals were pulled from optical. We had two jukeboxes with six drives each, but our demand was so high that the robotic arm never stopped pulling and loading disks."

This was a serious problem for end users because, not only were retrieval times unacceptably slow, but PCs locked up

during retrievals. IBM's solution to the problem was more hardware and operating system upgrades, and both were expensive propositions. "Before, we had a separate iSeries 400 just for our ImagePlus application," notes Glenn. "Now we can run IMS/21 along with other line-of-business applications on the same CPU."

**The IMS/21 system now has Averitt humming... when users request retrievals, documents are displayed in split seconds.**

## IMS/21 Opens the Road to Growth

IMS/21 is a second-generation document/content management suite from Vanguard Systems ([www.vansystems.com](http://www.vansystems.com)). When Averitt found its growth stymied by the limitations of its ImagePlus system, the IT staff, under the direction of project leader Michele Wilborn, began looking for an upgrade or change. While IBM and other imaging solutions from IBM business partners made offers, only Vanguard met the established criteria:

- Handle 60,000 documents per day with plenty of room for growth.
- Work with existing hardware (iSeries 400 and peripherals) and line-of-business applications.
- Keep the total cost of ownership in line with the expected return on investment.
- Meet strategic technical requirements including remote scanning, automatic workflow for incoming faxes, AFP printing, integration with Lotus Notes®/Domino, Internet viewing, and unlimited DASD.



**According to Wilborn, over an 18-month sales cycle, Vanguard answered all questions, respected (and beat) competitors, showed staff stability, and offered a solution native to the iSeries 400. "Every time we worked with them, we got a better and better feeling," she smiles.**

The IMS/21 system now has Averitt humming. Paper documents arriving at the Cookeville, TN headquarters get scanned within hours on two high-speed scanners. Documents from some service centers arrive by fax, and those are burst, indexed and stored according to bar codes they contain, without human intervention.

Images are available at any PC on the network, as well as at any service center. When invoices are printed, the system retrieves and prints all supporting documents (like proofs of delivery) and encloses them with the invoices. When users request retrievals, documents are displayed in split seconds.

Averitt stores documents on DASD as long as is needed. Documents also go on optical disks as soon as possible, so that in the future they can create duplicate backup copies written on separate optical disks and stored offsite. Under ImagePlus, only current billing could be electronically processed effectively since only eight days of documents were immediately available. "Now we can integrate past-due billing as well," details Wilborn. "For any function that is out there now, we can add a function key in our application software that will deliver images."

Anyone at Headquarters who needs images can get IMS/21 on their desktop since Averitt bought an unlimited license and, Glenn reports, setup takes about five minutes. With Lotus Notes for exchange software, images can fly from station to remote station like e-mail. This is a particular boost for the distant service centers.

## Document Imaging on the Internet

Use of the Internet extends to Averitt's website, which has two sides — public and private. Regular customers have access to the private side where they can request a pickup, track a shipment, view documents, request rates, or request specialized customer reports.

The reports come from IMS/21's Enterprise Report Management "Librarian" (COLD) module (which Averitt also uses for payroll and accounts payable). "I see the Internet side growing by leaps and bounds with e-commerce," comments Glenn. "Customers will request an ever-greater variety of documents and reports in many different ways."

Averitt will further exploit document management with a new, piloted business unit during 2001-02. Even now, as a pilot of electronic bill presentment, Accounts Receivable sends invoices to the website for customer lookup. As soon as late 2001, shippers will be able to pay these bills electronically as well. IMS/21 delivers the supporting documentation electronically. Wilborn expects this automation to significantly reduce the Day Sales Outstanding (DSO).

Customer Service is a major beneficiary of effective document imaging. When a shipper contacts Averitt's call center questioning a charge, a customer service operator immediately retrieves images of all bills and documents associated with the charge. If requested, the operator immediately faxes the proof to the shipper. This, too, helps limit Averitt's DSO.

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### **IMS/21 Delivers Security, Versatility and Ease of Use**

Averitt's IT Department's satisfaction mirrors that of its users. “Every part of the system is now immensely easier to manage and troubleshoot, if anything does happen,” opines Glenn. “Most of our issues are not system related and can be handled internally. IMS/21 is definitely easier than ImagePlus to use. We have to teach people, ‘You don't have to do all those steps anymore.’”

“We have more faith in the way IMS/21 manages the documents after they are in the system,” he continues. **“We haven't had the corruption that we had with ImagePlus.** And we like using Windows-based NT/2000® for our clients. Before, we had to use OS/2®, and there were too many pieces and parts that couldn't always work together.”

Glenn also gives high marks to Vanguard's training manuals and support. “I can handle about three-quarters of the questions I get from

our associates,” he reveals, “but if we have a question of any kind – even if it is our fault or we don't know where to start – the Vanguard Support Staff has never put us off. They really relate to our needs and always say, ‘Can do!’”

Wilborn sees an ever-expanding roll for IMS/21 at Averitt. “As more and more of our service centers do their own scanning, sending documents to Cookeville electronically, it will free up our scanners here at Headquarters,” she predicts. Then the scanning team will scan employee records and applications for the Human Resources department. With 6400 associates, that is a sizeable job. Citing the sensitivity of HR records, Wilborn notes,

**“We are very confident in the security of IMS/21 and the rest of our information system.”**



Digital photography looms as another integration opportunity for Averitt. Freight organization has been photographed for years, first with Polaroid cameras, but more recently digitally. While ImagePlus could not integrate those pictures, IMS/21 can. In the not-too-distant future, those photographs will be available, across the system, to customer service and whomever else needs to see them.

Before IMS/21, document management curtailed growth. But now Wilborn, Glenn and corporate management are confident that they can effect their plans, knowing that document and content management will enhance their efforts, not limit them. The future looks bright.



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