

UNISearch® AUTOMATED IMAGING FOR THE FREIGHT AND LOGISTICS INDUSTRY



Pilot Air: Their Accounting Moves as Fast as Their Freight

By Gordon E.J. Hoke, IMERGE Consulting

In 1999, Gene Malcolm of Pilot Air Freight www.pilotair.com had a big problem. He wanted to collect documents from his remote depots electronically, and he wanted to make shipping documents quickly available on Pilot's Web site. "In this industry, if you can't prove delivery, you don't get paid," he knew, "and that means documents – showing documents in the right way at the right time."

But his document system was failing him. At a time when he wanted more power from his system, he was getting less. The company that had sold him imaging seemed to be in turmoil and was definitely unresponsive. The system was not Y2K compliant, and the vendor wanted him to upgrade to a vastly more expensive product that was said to be more reliable but no more functional.

Malcolm is a Senior Vice President of Administration and Information Technology for Pilot, specialists in next-day delivery of shipments over 500 pounds. A 14-year veteran with the company, he knew there had to be a better alternative. "There were too many irregularities in the results of our system," he laments, "so we decided to look for a more responsive system with more accuracy. Air freight is a highly competitive industry," he adds, "and, although Pilot has grown every year of its existence, if we don't stay on top of technology, that string will end."

A Referral and a Solution

A business associate referred Malcolm to ComSquared Systems, Inc. www.comsquared.com, software developers and integrators with more than a dozen successful installations in the transportation industry. ComSquared also had experience replacing the old vendor's software while maintaining their data. That offer of continuity was important to Pilot.

While reliability and Y2K readiness were of premier importance, Malcolm and his crew defined three other goals:

- **Quickly get bills-of-lading and proofs-of-delivery on Pilot's Web site so shippers can track their own shipments.**
- **Collect these documents from 65 stations nationwide, automatically.**
- **Electronically generate invoices and statements with images of the supporting documents attached.**

If Pilot could achieve those goals, Malcolm reasoned, it could successfully compete. Could ComSquared help, he wondered?

ComSquared's Ron DeRosa, Vice President of Sales, and Kurt Thayer, Senior Account Executive, traveled to Pilot headquarters in suburban Philadelphia. Working with Malcolm, Pilot IS Director Mike Miller, and VP of Quality and Administration Lisa Coyle, DeRosa and Thayer performed a detailed Requirements and Definitions study. They meticulously traced the business flow, turning their functional design into a statement of work.

Coyle continues the story: "We looked at the statement of work and said, 'We can afford this,' and we decided to get UNISearch [ComSquared's suite of document-automation products]. We were scared and a little apprehensive because we had been burned. We got some new equipment – a new server and jukebox – but we didn't have to throw out the old system."

