Henson Group Sports Case Study

A promotional products company uses online proofing to enhance efficiency and customer service

Henson Group Sports is a leading provider of custom apparel to sporting goods dealers in North America and distributors in Central and South America. It operates three brands, reaching customers through a range of small sporting goods shops and national retail giants. Henson's products cover a variety of sports including wrestling, softball, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, field hockey, volleyball and rowing.

Because Henson specializes in custom-made apparel, it must create and share proofs with customers for approval before the design can go into production. On average, it manages over 500 separate proofs per month. IT/Systems Administrator Joe Purnell describes the complexity of Henson's workflow and the benefits of online proofing.

The customer, usually a sports retailer, comes to us with an idea for what they'd like on a uniform. Some projects are low-key, where they pick something out of our catalog and place their customers' team and logo on it; others are complete custom designs. The idea then goes to an artist who designs a mock-up and creates the proof. Responsibility for the proof is then switched to a customer service rep who puts in the customer's information and shares the proof with the customer.

The sharing and approval sequence varies: sometimes the store shares the proof with its end users; sometimes we'll share the proof directly with the end user; sometimes the store will approve the proof on behalf of the end user; and sometimes the store will send it to the end user for approval. It's really up to each individual store.

The Problem

"We were like a glorified switchboard"

We routed everything through email. After sending a proof to a customer they would email their requested changes back to the service rep who would then send it back to the artist. This would always slow down our projects.

We were like a glorified switchboard, constantly forwarding emails back and forth. It was very time consuming and would often put orders on hold.

Whether it was emailing the customer or emailing the artist, we had to have our hands involved at some point.

Making matters worse was when customers had a hard time articulating exactly what they wanted changed because they couldn't write directly on the proof. Sometimes we had to reword what the customer said to make directions clear for the artist.

ProofHQ Solution

"We needed something that was going to be really easy for them to understand with minimal training"

We needed a way to automate our approval process. We really wanted to cut down the lag time between the artist preparing the proof and getting it to the customer, but the solution had to be simple to use.

Many of our customers have one or two orders a year, so we needed something that was going to be easy for them to understand with minimal training; something they could use once and feel comfortable with instantly.

ProofHQ best met these needs. From the time we started the Success Start program, it was fully implemented in about 2-3 weeks. We then trained our employees and within a week they were all confident in their ability to use it.

Everyone loves the email notifications! The fact that it follows up with our customers so that we don't have to is fantastic. The annotation tools let our customers note things directly on the proof so it's much easier for them to articulate their feedback.

The Results

"We improved our efficiency by 20% during our busy season"

Our customer service reps spend much less time going back and forth with emails. They get more time to answer customers' questions rather than play 'email forwarder' all day. The workflow itself has not changed, except that the timeline has drastically decreased. If the artist uploads a new version of a proof, it now goes straight to the customer and it's often approved that same day.

We have improved our efficiency by 20% during our busy season just by proofing more effectively.

The technical support has also been excellent. From day one they went above and beyond anything that I expected. When we were researching online proofing solutions and had questions about technical flexibility, the support team was incredibly responsive the entire time, whereas with competitors I had to drag answers out of them. We couldn't be happier with ProofHQ!

About ProofHQ

ProofHQ is an online proofing solution for marketing teams of any size in any industry who need to deliver marketing projects faster and more efficiently. Unlike email and hardcopy proofing, ProofHQ enables review teams to collaborate simultaneously on creative content. ProofHQ streamlines approval workflow and can be used across all media including print, digital and audiovisual. It measurably speeds up project delivery and significantly reduces management time, revisions, errors and costs.

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