CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Fasteners Direct increases productivity by 25% with SmartCert

As a company that always goes the extra mile for its customers, Fasteners Direct deployed SmartCert to streamline its certification management.

Streamlining certification management with SmartCert

Overview

Cert management is consistently one of the greatest headaches in the industrial fastener industry. Even as the rest of the supply chain embraces automation and digital transformation, suppliers and customers still largely rely on physical documentation and email. This results in all manner of problems — lost documentation, chaotic fire drills, and payment delays, to name only a few.

For New York based Fasteners Direct which prides itself on putting its customers first, this was unacceptable. Although the company was perfectly capable of effective manual cert management with a smaller client-base, leadership knew that this approach would not scale. It would inevitably become a barrier to the organization's growth, while also greatly impacting the customer experience.

Fasteners Direct VP of Procurement and Operations Caia Baker knew there had to be a better way — and she found precisely that with SmartCert.

The Challenge: Breaking bottlenecks in the supply chain

"One of my roles at Fasteners Direct is to identify growth opportunities and find systems to automate and optimize our processes," recalls Baker. "Reducing both customer and employee downtime was a big part of that. We recognized early on that cert management was a major time sink, but there was never really a good system for it."

For a time, Fasteners Direct approached cert management in the same way as any other supplier. Everything was processed manually, which often required Baker and her team to chase down shipments and vendors to make sure everyone had access to the required documentation. This was ultimately unsustainable.

"At one point, I had a $10,000 order sitting on the shop floor that I couldn't ship because I didn't have the proper documentation to ship it," Baker continues. "That was the point that it became clear our current processes were not working. This wasn't how things were supposed to operate."

About Fasteners Direct

Fasteners Direct started small. In the early nineties, founder Herb Parr established the company as a means of providing jobs to his family. Today, the company occupies a 50,000+ square foot warehouse and provides next-day service to clients all over the East Coast.

The thing that makes Fasteners Direct truly stand out is its approach to its clients. The company goes to great lengths to ensure an exceptional customer experience, from personalized packaging to custom-printed labels for components. This includes both regular check-ins with clients and continuous optimization of its entire order chain from product list to final invoice.
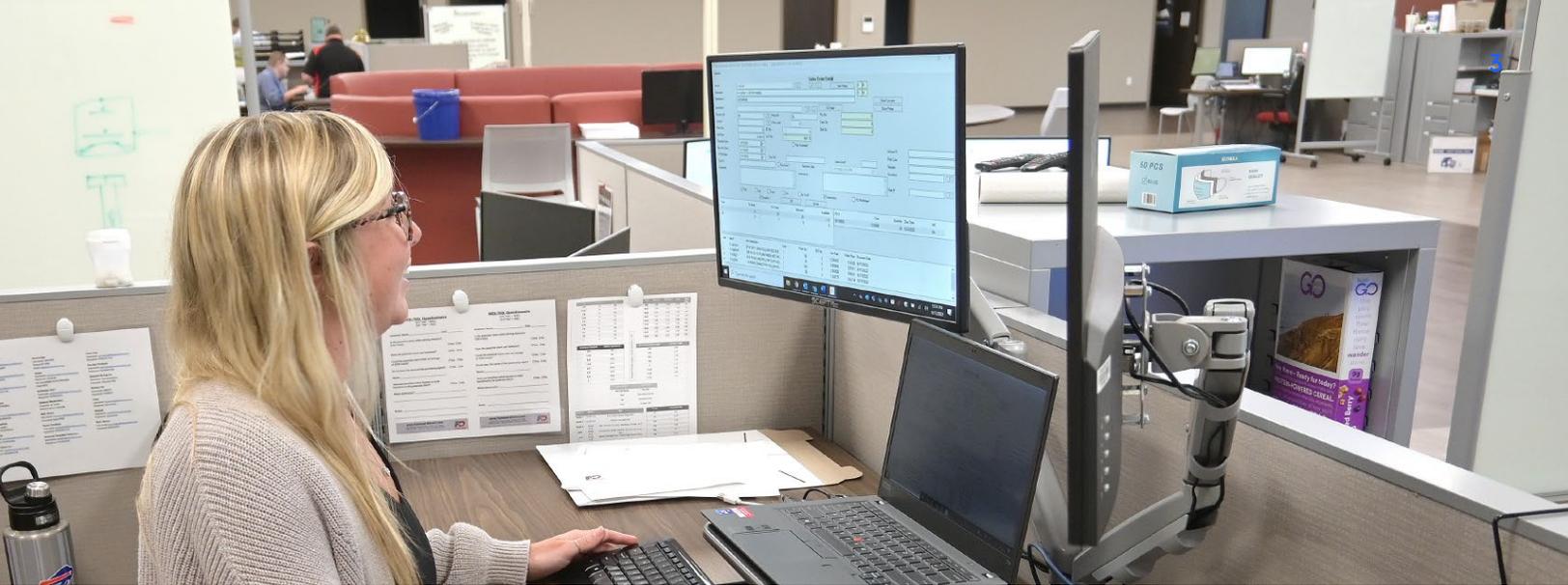
The Solution: Digital, automated certification management

When SmartCert first launched, Baker heard mention of it through a newsletter published by Jackie Ventura of Ventura Industrial Products. She was immediately intrigued, and quickly realized that this was exactly the solution her company was looking for. She wasted no time preparing a demonstration, which she then presented to leadership.

"When they saw what SmartCert could do, there was no hesitation or kickback whatsoever," says Baker. "Usually there's a debate about the pros and cons, but in this case, everyone agreed that we needed this — that SmartCert would solve all of our cert management problems."

SmartCert is a universal, cloud-based platform that simplifies every aspect of cert management. It allows businesses to seamlessly process, receive, and share digital quality certs, all of which are stored securely in a central location. Fully automated and designed for collaboration, the platform makes it easier than ever to add control, safety, and visibility to critical part information.

"The ability to streamline and automate takes away a great deal of stress, even if it is one more system to learn," notes Baker. "At the same time, I'd rather have to learn a new system than have the additional headaches that come with a lack of systemization."

"I don't endorse many platforms or systems. But in SmartCert's case, it helped us transform a process which was a horrible strain to deal with into something simple and streamlined. Instead of wasting hours on cert management, all we had to do was upload our documentation, then share a link — **we went from a logistical nightmare to one and done**."

— CAIA BAKER, VICE PRESIDENT OF PROCUREMENT AND OPERATIONS, FASTENERS DIRECT

The perfect system for the job

Fasteners Direct was one of the first companies to sign up for SmartCert. It continues to use the platform extensively and leverage the platform's automation capabilities. That functionality will come once it finalizes SmartCert's integration with its ERP system.

"As with any new system, there was a bit of a learning curve at first," Baker explains. "It was mostly down to learning different terminology. That problem was minor at best, and SmartCert has proved more than worth the cost and effort. We've gained a great deal more than we had to put in."
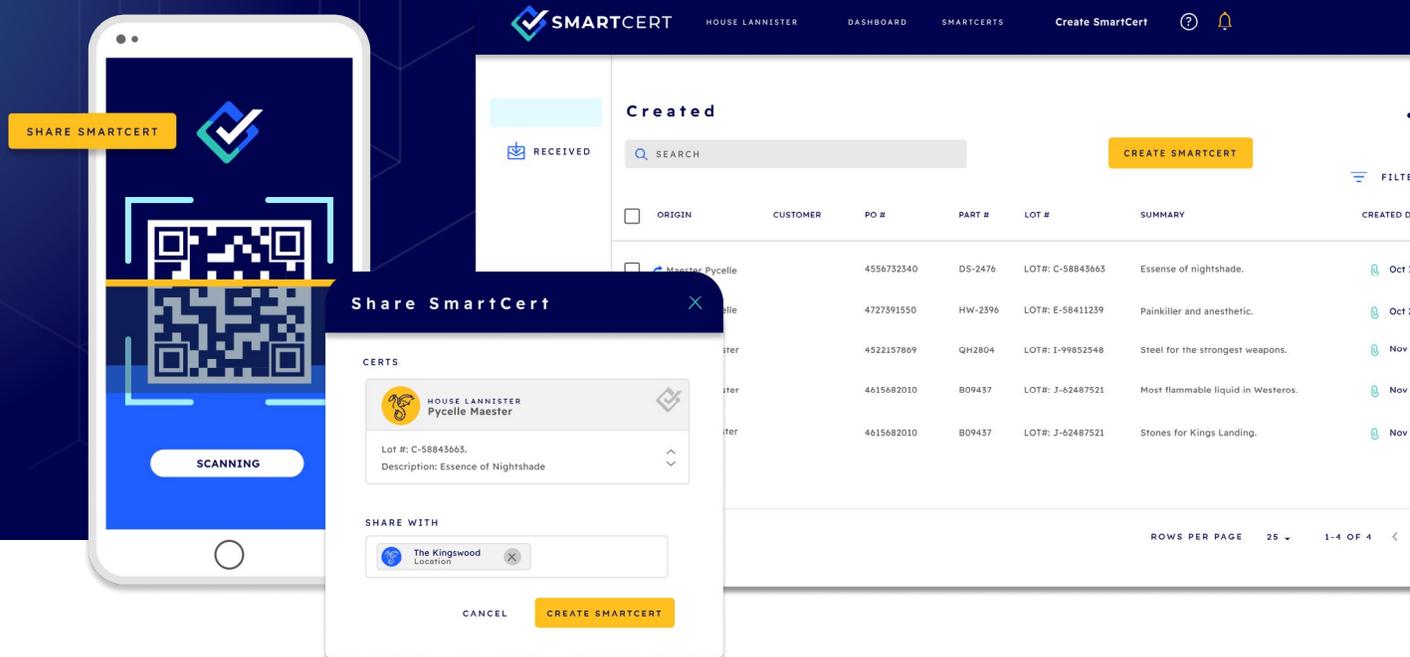
The Result: One and done cert management

With SmartCert, Fasteners Direct and its clients and vendors have access to everything they need in one location. Instead of having to chase down documentation or spend hours conferring with other companies, Baker and her colleagues can simply share a link that gives immediate access to all required information.

This has created new levels of efficiency for the company. Shipments are no longer being delayed because of missing certs. It also reduced the amount of quarantined parts due to receiving the wrong certs, and has helped the company better understand industry lingo, allowing them to identify cert errors faster than before. **All of these factors combined have led to a staggering 25% increase in productivity on orders with certs for the company.**

"In our old cert management process, even a single cert could cost us upwards of fifteen minutes," Baker continues. "There was a lot of back and forth — figuring out whether we needed to find a cert for a particular product, adding it to the purchase order, conferring with vendors, and so on. We had to do this maybe fifteen times a week or more."

"With SmartCert, we no longer have to worry about that," she concludes. "Once we've uploaded a cert to the platform, all we need to do is share a link, and everyone has access to everything they need."

THE END RESULTS ARE CLEAR.

SmartCert has helped Fasteners Direct embrace the shift to digital in a powerful way. The company sees SmartCert as a key partner in their long-term success, with plans to integrate certification requests into their website to further improve the overall cert requesting and sharing process.

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