

Success Stories by BABY UNIVERSE's Customers (a series of 10)

My name is Takanori Igarashi, CEO of Baby Universe Inc.

Our company has developed custom software for various customers for 28 years since we were established. There have been amazing strategies by them and a lot of wonderful functions in the products.

I believe sharing the success stories by our customers will be tips for sales growth and work efficiency on your business.

Therefore, I am going to release our newsletters to introduce you the stories twice a month, which will be total 10 stories.

Now, let's get started with 1st story.

Case-1:A win-win outcome strategy in a Japanese leading printing company.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

Cost-cutting is a major aim for companies request us customization. As a software developer, we consider cost-cutting to be labor costs reduction with automation: in other words, it is reduction of workflow.

At first, a Japanese printing company should have had the same idea, but it didn't.

The big company receives the huge amount and different types of data for printing every day. Though the company has strict specifications on the submitted data, there are only few perfect data. For that reason, it requires the company to spend a great deal of time and energy locating the error of the data for printing, which is named "Preflight Check" in print industry, and correcting the data.

The company requested us to develop an custom software of automation for Preflight Check and correcting data, but the development was a time-consuming task for us than we had thought because the submitted data to the company varied according to its customers' skills and it was far from perfect. So it took time to correct the data every time incomplete one was submitted.

As a result of our steady effort, we were able to deliver the product for reduction of workflow, completing requirements significantly.

I thought "Now it's done.", but the company asked us to improved product to hand it out for free to its customers. I was impressed by its brilliant strategy in the prestigious printing company. However, I wondered what advantages the company would have by giving the customers such a convenient product, even though they were very happy with it, as it is, I realized my worries were pointless thoroughly. It enabled to receive perfect data done with Preflight check and data correction because the data was created with the free software provided by the company. As this data was perfect, Preflight Check is no longer required. Eventually, this printing company satisfied the customers and achieved the goal of the cost reduction as well. I can say that this is successful case and also a definitely win-win strategy for customer retention.

What a fabulous strategy it is!

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Case-2: An aggressive cost reduction : AI simulator strategy in a Japanese LED sign maker.



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Our customer I'd like to share with you this time is a Japanese LED sign manufacturer.

What requested by it was also software for reduction of workflow at first, which was the same purpose as the customer's one in first story.

The sign company's insatiable request for cost-cutting was awesome. That's why it has achieved rapid growth.

The company had to design from scratch for each order and go through complex processes to make drawings because all products are made-to-order. To survive this situation, gradually realized cost reduction in every process of drawings using our automated software. And then it was crucial tool in designing flow for the company.

However, right after meeting its need, it gave us another request.

LED signs are used for a variety of company logos and marks. Each size is different. Therefore, the sign company needed to make prototype for each order to check light condition by visual confirmation and photometer. Believe it or not, the request from the company was to save trouble to make the prototype completely. So that means to develop 3D simulator. After going through a trail and error process to satisfy with that quality-oriented company and it took us a half year to complete it.

However, we realized even this completion only had scratched the surface of its commission.

Furthermore, the company asked us a development of design automation by AI (Artificial Intelligence) using the results of simulator. It is not too much to say that this request is an aggressive business strategy beyond the level of cost reduction.

What an incredible company in the world!

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Case-3:A high-flying outdoor clothing brand.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

This outdoor brand has been growing rapidly with its own strategy, and its growth will continue from now on.

Several years ago, this label requested us to develop an OEM product. It was a system and an app for customized orders, which can print a team name on ready-made sweat shirts, sweat pants and bags, so-called Team Order method.

It is common in sportswear industry and most of the Team Order products are normally made to order from its design.

However, the label's request was totally different from general customized orders in terms of adding new value on ready-made clothes.

This order method had been in decent demand at each shop, but it required a lot of work to check the finished image of the printed clothes between the manufacturer and customers.

Furthermore, the team name in violation of copyright was sometimes included in the customers' request or result different outcome from the customers' thought.

In such cases, the manufacturer had to redo from start.

So the brand asked us to customize the app for matching the printed products to the previewed image.

To the brand, there was no room for compromise on quality of the app.

To meet its expectation, we delivered the system, which runs at full blast on the cloud auto-typesetting server using our patented technology, and then made a great contribution to the advancement of the brand. There is no minimum order in this Team Order method, but generally, several dozen clothes are sold at once.

This method has effected to double in ready-made products and increase customers' satisfaction.

What a remarkable marketing strategy it is! It's fantastic.

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Case-4: Top Toymaker in Japan manufactures hundreds of boxes for thirteen languages.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

It was five years ago a Japanese leading toymaker, which has been known as a well-established one, asked us to develop software.

(Above photo is for illustrative purposes)

The toymaker requested labor-saving software for manufacturing boxes of its core brand product. I wasn't expecting the brand has been produced such a large quantity of the merchandise.

The toymaker has been manufacturing not only hundreds of boxes of its product for domestic distributions but also for overseas in thirteen languages.

Even more surprisingly, the boxes varied slightly across countries.

I wondered how it had dealt with daunting task. I learned from a staff member's weary look in an interview at a later date that there were tangled workflow and hard work there. The aim of the development he told us was

To cut workloads by half and typo-free.

So, after understanding the complicated workflow, we made proposals on improvement plans as follows:

To equip with a function to import examined information.

To equip with a function to auto-generate drafting of boxes and printing data seamlessly.

Although those proposals weren't accepted at first, after frequent consultation, we got a green light from its executive managing director. We didn't have any problems with technical issues to develop software for boxes because we were well experienced in doing that. However it was tough for us to develop software for making templates for thousands of boxes, dealing with international differences in complex specs. of boxes.

The other day, I received a letter from him. He said in it, " The software you developed helps us a lot."

Then I realized all of our hard work has paid off. I was grateful for his message.

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Case-5: Request for development of CAD for Fact Sheet from top real estate company.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

Several years ago, a big IT company offered us to visit an industry-leading company that was familiar on TV commercial.

(Above image is illustration purpose only and differs from actual fact sheet.)

First interview was started in a packed meeting room.

I see. I learned there our customers were talking about the one that was called fact sheet in real estate industry, which was a sheet with a floor plan drawing and other information about properties and we were able to find on the windows of local real estate office.

What the company wanted us to do was to reproduce CAD for preparing fact sheet with Adobe Illustrator, because the CAD became obsolete and reached end of support although it had been developed with a major IT vendor. We expected it was quite simple to us to reproduce.

However, that gave us a hard time afterward. There were big differences between CAD and Illustrator in their structure and UI, but the request was to keep the existing usability unchanged and to add several advanced new functions. To fulfill the request, we had to develop dozens of sophisticated unique tools because most of the functions were not implemented on Illustrator.

What was the biggest challenge in the development? It was to follow ease of use on the original CAD. Since the company stuck to the usability, the plug-in development turned out to be an unprecedented large-scale.

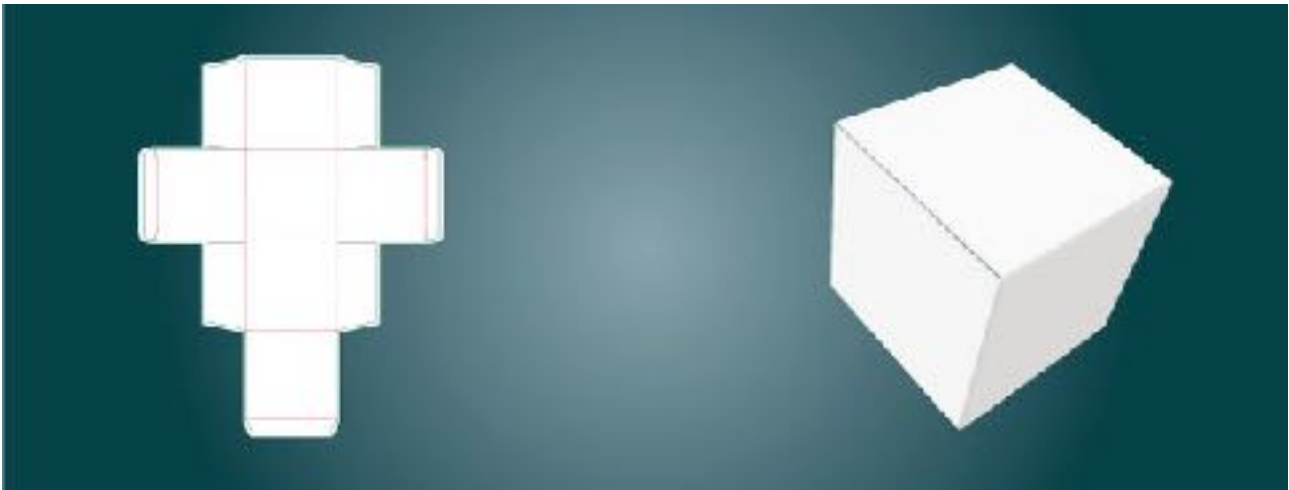
Even after completing the function, we had to redo several times because of subtle difference in operability between the original one and our reproduced one. So our developer all but threw up his hands several times.

In spite of such a tough situation, finally, our product passed acceptance inspection way behind schedule. And now all fact sheets have been created by the "CAD for fact sheet with Adobe Illustrator in the company and its overseas affiliated company.

And all of the fact sheets posted on the large windows of a real estate agent next to our office likewise.

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Case-6:Customer retention strategy by corrugated box manufacturer.



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The main purpose of software development our clients request has been mostly to fulfill labor saving (=reducing payroll) since they faced labor shortage issues.

In that time, more than a dozen years ago, we learned there was different aim,“customer retention strategy”.

Furthermore, we were shocked to know how the strategy realized in several major electronics appliances manufacturers and commodity manufacturer.

By the way, what is “ customer retention strategy”?

It means the strategy to provide absolutely convenient tools to its customers at no fee. That is not enough to only give the useful functions and it's pointless if there isn't a way that the provider gets order automatically once the tools are used. Doing this will retain your customers. In most of top manufacturers, they have a department which designs containers, packing boxes, freight containers.

It is corrugated box manufacturers and corrugated box printmaking company that work with the department and manufacture the corrugated boxes.

The manufacturer has to create manufacturing data and printing data for corrugated boxes by enormous amount of products and moreover to give the data to corrugated box manufacturers and printmaking company with spec. sheets, and then this complicated process can cause a lot of mistakes.

One reason why is that top manufactures have to manufacture corrugated boxes according to standards or languages in export counterparts when exporting, so it requires large amounts of time and efforts.

What would you do if you could complete most of such time-consuming processes(from order, creating data automatically through final checking), using cloud?

You will definitely place an order the company that provides you the convenient tools because it enables you to shorten delivery time, to reduce mistakes and labor saving.

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Case-7: Outlined Font Recognition Technology.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

I am going to call graphicized font “outlined font” here, although it doesn’t make sense because the font itself doesn’t have any font information.

About 10 years ago, we were surprised that we received an order of an app for this "outlined font" from a major printing company.

It normally prints on a great deal of packaging materials for new products rolled out by a various type of manufacturers. Therefore, even a little mistake can lead to massive typographical errors, not only pay for cost but also lose the confidence of its valued customers.

For that reason, it was a time consuming and tension-filled task to complete final proofreading data.

When correcting data, the original font information is required because most of the design data submitted by the manufacturers have already been changed to outlined font.

However, it was not easy to get the information, and also took a lot of time and effort because recognizing alphanumeric characters and several thousands of Japanese by its shape requires high-level graphic recognition technology. In addition, it is very difficult to recognize outlined font with narrow or wide fonts.

In fact, the company needed an app to get the original font information correctly by outlined font.

For solution, we developed the app enables you to automatically detect the feature of all fonts and of all character shapes and then to create instantaneously information file for all character shapes.

This information file enabled the printing company to detect instantly even huge amount of fonts and to get accurately information even for ratio of wide fonts to narrow fonts.

Probably, the company may not be aware of our efforts, but it is a great satisfaction to us that our customer uses the app as indispensable tools.

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Case-8: Completely Eliminate Printing Errors in List of Ingredients.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

The most common printing errors can solve with printing again.

However, once the misprints are found on the label of toiletry and food products, recall can be required and it may be huge claimed against damage.

In reality, it is said that main reason for products' recalls is typo on the ingredients labels rather than defects of product itself, so each manufacturer or printing company always focus on avoiding misprint, not designing of package.

More than ten years ago, one of large toiletry companies in Japan asked us to develop software for detecting printing errors in list of ingredients.

We didn't guess it would take long time to develop it because it had simple function for locating errors between the original text file with excel and ingredients labels. So our estimate was accepted smoothly.

However, it turned into be our nightmare.

Let's say, as there are often no space between each item in ingredient label it is impossible to detect the error once missing item happens in the beginning part of the list and creates a disconnect within the list.

I mean human beings can find the disconnect easily, but computer mistakes "everything is wrong after this item." In some aspects that isn't wrong. We needed to think about most fundamental part, "definition of discrepancy".

Even after delivering beta version with all functions, we confronted various problems and debugged them. It took us twice as long as we'd expected.

Although this project ended in the red due to our failure of estimate, at the same time this was our inevitable development case to perform adequately in the area of validation.

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Case-9: Assist Tool for Producing Game Character.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

We've ever developed systems for assisting Animation trace, but it was the first time to work for a famous game company several years ago. I didn't even know that most of games characters with movements are created by Adobe Illustrator, 2D software, although game creators sometimes use 3D software.

To move characters created by 2D software, those body parts including directions of body or face, and body parts according to movements of arms and legs are required. In addition, that needs movements with various stuff such as clothes, accessories etc.

And then the client gave us two strict instructions;

When each part is put, arrange each part precisely and automatically.

Deposit it on designated layer.

We were at a loss that there were millions of parts, differences of form, several tens of layers and many combinations. We were also astonished that a character producer used to do the task.

While we were given the strict order, we suggested using UI (User Interface).

The important thing to complete our task was not only to add user-friendly UI, also feature to avoid fatal mistakes.

Actually, we had a hard time after delivering. We had to fix the finished product several times because we realized a need of fine-tune after the product had been used on production site.

However, if millions of game users enjoy playing the games without stress, we believe our efforts are rewarded.

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Case-10 : Auto-generated tool for Infographic.



※The above image is for illustrative purpose only.

The above picture is just an example and in practice, chart can be more complex. “Infographic means data visualization and is a combination for “information” and “graphic”.

More than 20 years ago, we got a job offer from one of Japan top news agencies. It is famous for distributing report of nation election, which is the largest event for the House of Councilors and the House of Representatives, with influential charts on next day’s paper.

At that time, dozens of elite staff on graphic production team made election returns from all over the country into charts by hand. However, it took a lot of time for even the elite staff to make complicated charts after calculating. While the staff had to meet the deadline, no mistake was allowed.

Our tasks given by the agent were two as follows:

- to generate within seconds per one chart
- auto-generated, error-free typescript

Although we were able to complete first task by computer, about second one, High quality was required on the newspaper typescript, including no-error values in the chart.

As may be expected of major news agency, it had several punctilious rules for printing data and we had to deal with that.

After getting over the difficulties, we delivered the tool. On the day of national election, we always go to work after voting and pray to God and computer during ballot counting, “Please don’t make any mistakes”.