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Article written by Apple about DVR Consulting, Inc.

Creating Identities for Businesses Everywhere - written by Apple

By Brad Cook

The scene could be a photo shoot for a magazine or a catalog. A row of iMac



computers sit before stools backed by blue screens and bathed in the soft glow of portrait lights. Canon GL-1 digital cameras, connected to the [iMacs](#) via [FireWire](#), stand ready to snap high quality digital images. Ethernet cables link the iMacs to two Power Mac G4 computers that send the final pictures to top-of-the-line security badge printers.

Yes, that's right: security badges. While many companies have a security badging process that's akin to having your driver's license photo taken, Don von Rotz of [DVR Consulting](#) offers a creative approach: high-quality badges with professional graphics and photos that employees can be proud of, thanks to his proprietary, Mac-only Badger system.

"The material costs the same, so you might as well do something good with it," he says.

A League of Their Own

Von Rotz has always looked at his work a little differently, whether DVR Consulting is offering security badges or business solutions. DVR's first major job was at a GM automotive plant in Fremont, where he proved that his company's creativity and ingenuity was more important than its size.

The managers at that plant needed a computer-based inspection system that would not only replace the inefficient paper-based process they had been using, but would also be able to handle about 300,000 cars per year without constantly breaking down.

"We went in there and competed against Digital Equipment and Intel," recalls von Rotz. "One of our guys put together a demo in HyperCard and no one could show them anything close to what we had done. We offered a live demo and all they could say was 'Wow, they have something that works already.' The other vendors were showing them flowcharts and things like that."

Unbelievably Reliable

A favorable impression made, DVR won the job and installed 23 Macintosh computers attached to color monitors with touch screen overlays. Ten years later, that plant has upgraded to a mix of iMac and [Power Mac G4](#) computers and the system still works like a charm, even with two or sometimes three shifts of inspectors a day — each completing about 470 cars in one shift.

"The Macs have been unbelievably reliable in that environment," says von Rotz. "You have machines that are as far as a mile away from each other, so you're using Timbuktu constantly. PCs couldn't do the job."

Introducing Badger

During the decade since that break-through, DVR has created solutions for a variety of clients, from Lawrence Livermore Labs in Liv-

ermore, CA, to the NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, CA, where they rolled out a purchase request system on 1,500 desktops.

Recently, the company introduced Badger. They've had a lot of success in the badging industry too, even though security people at most corporations and government agencies are entrenched in Windows. Armed with their Macs, von Rotz and his team have worked hard to change attitudes — not only towards the Mac but also towards the badging process itself. “For the most part,” von Rotz says, “companies just take stock shots and the employees hide them in their wallets.”

To prove his point, he pulls out a badge from a consulting job he did a few years ago. The photo looks like a police mug shot and the graphics are muddy and barely legible.

“You can't just take somebody off the street and say ‘Here, do this,’” he says. “You need someone with a photographic background. Even I took wedding pictures for two years.”

Nobody Else Does What They Do

Now DVR provides badging services for several companies, including Apple Computer. The DVR team recently converted badges at the company's Cupertino, CA, and Elk Grove, CA, offices. Thanks to their Macintosh setup, they can print badges of such pristine quality that employees want to show them to their colleagues. “On a PC system, if a badge prints out and it kinda looks like the guy, everyone's happy,” says von Rotz. “With FireWire, we're going straight to digital video now with these cameras. On the PC, they barely have the stuff working.”

Last year, DVR even did a job for Intel, who sponsored the Computing Continuum Conference in March. The conference allows researchers from the computer industry and academia to discuss the future of computers. Intel chose DVR, von Rotz says, because “nobody else does what we do.”

Happier Customers

DVR has installed Badger at the E! Channel in Los Angeles and Sonoma State University,

among other places. Every time they sell a badging system, they leave Badger in the hands of someone at the company who they've trained to use the software and hardware.

And then they usually never hear from their clients again, even though technical support is part of DVR's package.

“Our customers rarely call us,” says von Rotz. “Many times we have to call them to see if they're still going okay. We're talking two or three years later, and occasionally they order supplies, but that's it.”

That kind of reliability is the reason why von Rotz chose the Mac.

“You don't want to sit there on the phone all day, supporting someone,” he says, “so, from our perspective, we'd much rather have Mac customers than PC customers, because on our end there's much less support and on the other end there's a happier customer.”

The Day Badger Came to Apple

Don von Rotz figured that the badging job at Apple would pretty routine: go in, set up the equipment, snap a few thousand photos and print a ton of badges. Nothing unusual about that.

Until someone asked if he could hold up an apple while having his photo taken.

Then the floodgates opened and soon employees were showing up with guitars, playing cards, their Macintosh computers and other props. Several employees, seeking to exploit the large blue screens used as backdrops, even came in with PMS books of color swatches to determine the exact shade of blue of the background.

“We're always looking to improve what we're doing, but what happened here is something I've never seen before,” von Rotz says.