

Kurzweil Educational Systems

Customer Profile

Dave Burns

General Manager, Ray Sands Glass
and Kurzweil 3000 User



Believe you **can**

The Situation

Dave Burns is an entrepreneur and a successful businessman. He also has a significant learning disability that has made reading, writing and spelling extremely difficult. After struggling for many years, he discovered Kurzweil 3000 reading and writing software, which has given him a level of freedom and independence he had despaired of ever achieving.

As a student, Dave had great difficulty with reading and writing. It was obvious that something was wrong, but nobody knew how to fix it. While he eventually learned to read and write, the process was slow, painful and erratic. He managed by memorizing as much information as he could, but always felt anxious about his disability.

After high school, Dave's work as an auto mechanic led to a position as an auto-adjuster for a major insurance company. He excelled at his new job, but struggled with the paperwork, resorting again to memorizing key words and abbreviating wherever possible. Despite his success at work, Dave felt insecure and uncomfortable because of his disability.

In 1983, he and his brother bought Ray Sands Glass, an automotive glass replacement and commercial/residential glass business located in Rochester, NY. While his understanding of the business and his industry connections were invaluable assets, Dave recalls the cumbersome process he had to follow to handle the growing amounts of paperwork. "Every piece had to be handwritten, dictated, transcribed, reviewed and edited. Not only was I working extra hours to keep up, but the stress was incredible."

The Solution

Finally, in 1997, Dave got so fed up with his daily struggle with paperwork that he decided to tackle his reading and writing difficulties, even

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Dave Burns Ray Sands Glass, Rochester, NY

Dave Burns (cont.)

if it meant starting from the very beginning. He began working intensively with a tutor who suggested he try out two software programs that might make things easier for him. The programs were Dragon Dictate and Kurzweil 3000. "Not only did they help," Dave reminisces, "but they literally changed my life. Suddenly I could get through a pile of invoices that might have taken a full morning in a little more than an hour. And with much less stress. Most days now, I forget I even have a disability."

Dave now dictates directly into Dragon Dictate, opens his documents in Kurzweil 3000, then spell checks them, listens for content and fluency, and makes any corrections. The fact that Kurzweil 3000 can read back text in any format has taken the frustration out of handling the many types of business forms he encounters daily. Dave now can spend part of every day dealing with the strategic aspects of the business like staying on top of his industry. Once a frustrated information hound, he can now easily browse the Internet, download the articles he's interested in as well as scan in trade-related papers and books.

Dave is proud to point out that as Ray Sands Glass has grown, he's been able to assist his brother by taking on more management responsibilities including invoicing and ordering supplies. He believes his own reliance on technology has made him more comfortable and proficient using a wide variety of software programs. And as an added bonus, Dave is pleased to note, his sight vocabulary and spelling have significantly improved." The fact that Kurzweil 3000 highlights text as it reads provides me with continuous reinforcement. Without really trying, I've discovered that I've become a much more fluent and confident reader." Another plus for Dave is the joy of reading for pleasure. Now that he can quickly scan and listen to books, he's become an avid reader of military history, a topic he was once too timid to explore.

The Results

In looking back, Dave reflects, "Kurzweil 3000 not only saves me hours of time every day, but it also enriches the quality of my life and my level of independence." Well aware of the impact Kurzweil 3000 has had in his own life, he is always on the lookout for software products that will make other jobs at Ray Sands quicker, more efficient and easier. Dave strives to make his company a place where people can use whatever means necessary to enhance their productivity and personal well being.



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About Ray Sands Glass

Ray Sands Glass (www.raysandsglass.com) is an automotive replacement and commercial/residential glass business with retail centers in Rochester and Canandaigua, NY. Started in 1946 by Ray Sands, the company was sold to Frank and David Burns in 1983. Since then the business has continued to flourish. Currently the company boasts 7000 square feet of glass shop area enabling Ray Sands to handle jobs of all sizes.

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