

**Client:** Little Giant Ladder Systems

**Industry:** Manufacturing

## A Little M-Files, A Giant Help

*Indexing graphic files a simple way to keep track of marketing assets*

**Little  
Giant  
Ladder Systems**<sup>®</sup>

The marketing department at Little Giant Ladder Systems faced a common problem. How do you keep the multiple versions of graphic assets (JPEGs, Photoshop/Illustrator files, PDFs, video files) organized so you can retrieve and re-use them months later?

The 37-year-old family-run manufacturer brought its line of convertible ladders to national attention through TV infomercials starring its owner, Hal Wing. The marketing team also supplies hundreds of independent dealers across the country with a full array of marketing materials, everything from color brochures of new products to digital format JPEGs demo videos for website sales.

Over the course of years, product imagery accumulated. Little Giant offered more than a dozen model, some with over 20 different configurations. Additionally, each ladder shot was modified and re-saved for different purposes. One image might be saved as high-res or low-res, with new dimensions, in different formats, compressed, cropped, or color-balanced, so on and so on.

“We had thousands of files and were tired of not being able to find things,” says Marketing Coordinator Amber Moss, “We would spend over twenty minutes looking for an image or file and when we finally found it we were unsure if it was the correct version or not.”

That was a couple years ago. Now Moss can retrieve a set of precise results in a matter of seconds. By typing a few terms into a search box, like the type of ladder, name of a brochure, format, version or product number. The relevant candidates pop up quickly as icons, filling out into thumbnail images. Moss easily spots the one she wants and opens it. “M-Files is great, it only takes me five seconds to find a specific file among thousands.”

The marketing department found the [M-Files document management software](#) through an Internet search for metadata indexing software products. They wanted to attach metadata – the database-stored key terms like product name, brochure project, or even technical descriptions – to each graphic file saved.

M-Files document management integrates seamlessly into the Windows file explorer as well as into the open/save dialogue boxes of each individual application, like Adobe Photoshop and InDesign, Microsoft PowerPoint, or even video editing applications. The metadata definitions identify each new file uniquely, eliminating unnecessary duplicates, making it easy to know how one version differs from another.

The installation of M-Files also had the effect of consolidating all the marketing imagery that had been saved on both the network server and local workstations into a single, centralized location.

“The M-Files client-server configuration makes it possible for anyone who needs project files can to get into any machine and connect into the digital storage vault,” says Little Giant IT director Ben Rees.



The data vault can also be accessed online from anywhere through a standard Web browser. After adding a few security permissions, the marketing department gave salespersons across the country the login to M-Files vault so they can search and download Little Giant Ladder brochure files, video demonstrations, or individual product images.

“M-Files metadata and file management has been a great help, especially in distributing these resources to the dealers,” Rees remarks. “When they connect remotely, the sales people have a list of read-only folders they can access. They just drag and drop the files they want onto their desktop. It seems to work really well for them. There are probably 300 or 400 dealers who use it on a consistent basis. This works for us, too; our department doesn’t have to handle hundreds of special requests or mail out printed materials to the sales reps.”

The Innovations Team at Little Giant Ladder has been busy making new products -- Microburst, SumoStance and SelectStep -- and taking further advantage of M-Files to store new research, drawings, photos, new labels, packaging, verbiage and videos.

Try indexing your own graphic content with a [free trial of M-Files](#).

### **About Little Giant Ladder Systems**

Part of Wing Enterprises, Little Giant Ladder Systems now holds worldwide patents and trademarks on many innovations in ladder design and manufacturing, and its world-class R&D department continues to develop new products that are revolutionizing the ladder industry. Today, Little Giant manufactures and distributes a complete line of ladder products that are used by homeowners, professionals and businesses throughout the world. Little Giant is still a family business as it was when it started, with sons Art and Doug in the management team, and many aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews and grandchildren helping throughout. For more information, visit [www.littlegiantladder.com](http://www.littlegiantladder.com).