Coastal Office Solutions, Victoria, Texas, switched to the Thalerus software platform in 2015, when its then-supplier stopped updating the software the company had been using. According to co-owner Shad Estes, Coastline had already paid that supplier to migrate to one of its other platforms. However, more than four months later, the provider hadn't started the integration. Tired of waiting, Coastal requested a refund and turned to Thalerus instead.

"It was a good move for us," says Estes. "Thalerus offers a more Windows-based system that is easy to use and to integrate with other programs. The software company's online portal, VIBENet, is a robust system with a lot of features and options. We have a lot of accounts with several buyers in different locations and the need for multiple approvals. The platform makes it easy."

Another option Thalerus offers is the ability to do punchouts. Punchouts link clients directly from their computers to a vendor's website for direct, fast, easy ordering of products preapproved by the institution's purchasing department. This also works well for

"The company is constantly upgrading the software to make it better."

accounts with multiple buyers and locations. "We just finished a punchout with a major university here in Texas and are starting on another one," Estes says. "It makes it really easy for them to order and is great for bringing more business."

Coastal operations manager Jennifer Mikolas adds: "We knew nothing about how to do a punchout, but Thalerus walked us through the process and made it easy."

An additional front-end functionality Estes and Mikolas favor is the ability for clients to order based on their interests by clicking on icons for features such as recyclable or UPS shippable. They also like that customers can make custom lists of the products they buy most frequently to make ongoing ordering easier.

Estes is particularly pleased with the esthetics of the Coastal website:

"Besides being functional, it's a pretty website. One potential account said having a pretty website was important and asked me if ours is pretty. I answered yes. They looked at the site and said, 'You're right—it is a pretty website.'"

Mikolas works primarily on the back end. "I like the reporting options," she says. "I like the ability to download and manipulate data and being able to easily upload from other programs I use, like Exel."

Something else that has impressed both Estes and Mikolas is the Thalerus team's attitude. "Thalerus is very customer-service oriented," reports Estes. "The company listens to you and what you are looking to do, and is willing to make revisions and enhancements to make it happen. The company is constantly upgrading the software to make it better."