

CASE STUDY | Logistics service provider optimises warehouse picking with printers from Citizen



Founded in Neu-Isenburg, Germany in 1999, ProReServ GmbH is one of the largest providers of retail services in Germany. The company offers its clients an integrated merchandising and logistics system that consists of racking management, logistics, sales support, category/space management and administration and acts as the link between manufacturers, distributors and retailers. With 10 years of experience, more than 140 employees, around 150 sales people, as well as a state-of-the-art SAP system, ProReServ offers intelligent solutions for retail in Europe. In July of 2004, the company became certified according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2000.

The company growth of ProReServ meant that a number of additional picking workstations had to be set up at the logistics centre in Gelsenkirchen in 2007.

As a result of these considerations, the basic decision was made to equip all of the workplaces with Linux workstations and flat screen monitors and connect them to the existing warehouse management system through ethernet. Due to the fact that the barcode readers and label printers had already been in use for over seven years, it was only logical to replace these systems as well. In doing so, ProReServ was seeking to avoid the rising costs for repairs and downtime that could be expected, due to how long these devices had been in use. "Besides, it would have been much more expensive and more difficult to integrate these existing devices into the new modern infrastructure," Janßen adds.

Expert consulting makes the difference

In the area of Auto-ID, ProReServ had already been working together with Norlan GmbH in Neukirchen-Vluyn for many years. Norlan specializes in system integration with Auto-ID applications for operational and storage warehouses and transport-related logistics and so they were the ideal partner for this new project.

"At Norlan, we know that comprehensive testing in advance truly helps to avoid surprises during installation that require considerable time to fix later on," explains the Managing Director of Norlan, Frank Verhufen. "This is why we decided together with ProReServ to set up a test installation for one workstation in order to test whether this would offer a good connection to the AS/400 – and be user-friendly."

In terms of printer selection, the decision was made in favour of the CL-S700 from Citizen Systems featuring a 203 dpi printhead and an integrated Ethernet card. This was then to be connected to the warehouse management system that is installed on the AS/400. As the print files are stored on the AS/400 and modifications require significant effort, this was definitely an important reason for switching to new print systems. Additionally, there was also a need to continue to use the existing consumables

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"We were interested in renewing our complete infrastructure with respect to workplaces,"

reports Marion Janßen, Head of Logistics and Inside Sales at ProReServ.

"Nevertheless, expansion based on the existing Twinax technology was out of the question as it was no longer up-to-date and would have required significant financial expenditures. We did not see this as being a promising approach for the future,"

Janßen adds.

User-friendliness made the difference

User acceptance was yet another important aspect. After all, introduction of new printers should ideally result in easier-to-use technology such as how easy it is to change the printer's ribbon. The integrated **ARCP™ technology** (Active Ribbon Control and Positioning) eliminates any ribbon wrinkle and media slippage on small or specialist media and the **Hi-Lift™** metal mechanism opens to a full 90° to allow for easy ribbon access.



“Of course, the individual workstations do not really offer that much working space. For this reason, it turned out to be rather advantageous that the Citizen printers can be opened from the front to provide access to all standard functions. In addition, their footprint remains the same, even when they are opened. This means that the printer does not have to be moved in order to change printing media,” adds **Verhufen**.

The initial tests with the Citizen **CLP7201e** printers commenced during the second half of 2007. After these were completed to the full satisfaction of the customer, a total of 20 of the newer **CL-S700** printers were delivered and installed in **January of 2008**. To begin with, the new workstations were set up and put into operation. As a second step, the new printers were installed at the individual workplaces.

ProReServ is now using the new printers to print all of its package labels for use in sending products to the customers at its logistic centre. Experience has shown that the printers are capable of standing up to these challenging environmental conditions.

Easy implementation and fast ROI

Janßen is also pleased to note that no additional modifications were necessary with respect to the warehouse system, thanks to the easy implementation. They only needed to modify the configuration of the print control system as they are now connected via **Ethernet**. “The printers have proven to be simple and easy to use and, thus, contribute towards smooth operation. They require no administration, a task that would take additional time,” **Janßen** says.

“Thanks to how well the printers perform, we are now able to print **much more quickly** and the costs for spare parts, such as print heads, are much lower than before which means we have reason to expect lower total costs of ownership. This will definitely lead to **fast ROI**. Overall, we are extremely happy, particularly thanks to the excellent consulting and comprehensive tests that were performed in advance; execution has been very smooth and has not required any resources on our side,” concludes **Janßen**.

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Professional Retail Service GmbH

Featuring printers:

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Robust and reliable industrial label printer:

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About Citizen Systems Europe



Citizen Systems Europe operates from London, UK and Esslingen, Germany covering Europe, Middle East and Africa. Citizen offers a broad range of thermal label & barcode printers, portable and dot matrix printers, mini and POS printers. Via a network of specialized partners, these are sold into markets as diverse as industrial, retail, healthcare and mobile applications.

Citizen Systems Europe is a wholly owned subsidiary of Citizen Systems Japan and part of the Citizen Watch Company of Japan. The globally operating group produces its world-famous eco drive watches and mini printers, industrial print systems and machine tools, crystal oscillators, LEDs and other electronic components.

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