



Wincanton improves its investment in its central European logistics centre with Zebra QL 420™ mobile printers.

Wincanton Trans European is one of Europe's largest logistics companies. With 27,000 staff worldwide, the company also has 14 Polish branches employing over 740 staff. Its regional head quarters is in Poland, as well as its 26,000 square metre main logistics centre located in Loziska, close to Piaseczno, on the outskirts of Warsaw.

Wincanton is an organisation which seeks unique logistics solutions. Its culture embodies innovation and the provision of bespoke services adapted to customer needs and requirements. In addition it leads the way with state-of-the-art logistics technology.

CHALLENGE

High warehouse service running costs (particularly in paper)

A time consuming, paper based warehouse picking process

Remote printing affecting employee productivity

Operator errors in the picking process

SOLUTION

Implementation of a paperless on-demand mobile printing as part of new IT warehouse system

BENEFITS

Saves time

Reduces warehouse paper costs

Improves employee productivity and level of service provided in its warehouse

Achieves better stock level control

CHALLENGE

Staff at Wincanton's Loziska logistics centre work in a challenging environment where trucks are constantly being loaded and unloaded and where a high work rate along with effective time management are essential.

"Previously staff used a picking list for preparing batches. This comprised of listed items arranged per customer order in the picking area," explains Patryk Pajak, IT director for Central and Eastern Europe. "A warehouse employee moving along the shelves would load an empty pallet with the required items from the picking list.

Once the order was complete, the whole pallet would then be shrink-wrapped, a picking list would also be inserted inside the pallet and a label stuck on top – often this would be printed in an office located up to 30 metres away from the warehouse. Only after this time consuming process would the pallet be ready for customer collection at the relevant warehouse gate."

Hard copy documents would be printed for all received and dispatched consignments. As both laser and label printers were located in the warehouse office, printing documents involved walking a few hundred metres and back. This process not only wasted a lot of time, but also increased the risk of errors being made by using the wrong documents or labels on the wrong consignments.



Solution Technology

Zebra QL 420 wireless mobile printers

Handheld mobile terminal scanner



"Consequently the warehouse service running costs were extremely high as staff were wasting time printing and collecting documents from the office. This process also used up vast reams of paper, in fact, a truck-load of paper used to arrive each month just for Wincanton's requirements," recalls Patryk Pajak.

SOLUTION

Wincanton introduced a mobile system for identifying consignments. This not only made it the company's first central European branch to do so, but also one of the first Polish logistics companies to deploy such a system. Equipment from leading manufacturers was used to implement the system, with an in-house IT team modifying the existing warehouse system and writing new programs.

Once implemented, the new system enabled warehouse staff to use mobile terminals along with barcode scanners and Zebra QL 420 mobile printers. These printers have been adapted to operate in warehouse depots where environmental conditions (such as dust, temperature variations and vibration) are too harsh for laser printers. They can also withstand being dropped onto concrete floors and due to the special wireless network these mobile devices can communicate directly with the main computer system.

"The current process for finalising orders involves the warehouse employee using the terminal to read the picking list. Using a trolley with a pallet he locates the product on the relevant shelf as indicated by the terminal. Once identified, the product's barcode is scanned and if it matches the order the system allows the user to load the required amount on the pallet. The name and storage location of the next product is then highlighted. On finalising the order, the consignment is packed and shrink-wrapped. The transport label is then immediately printed by the warehouse employee using the Zebra mobile printer which he carries," explains Patryk Pajak.

The new paperless system can not only be used to finalise individual orders, but also to process other warehouse activities ranging from goods in, to inventory, picking and finally to dispatch. All information required by the warehouse service is highlighted on the terminal screens, with required labels printed using the Zebra mobile printers.

BENEFITS

The new system has helped Wincanton to significantly improve the level of service provided in its logistics centre, whilst also reducing costs.

"The mobile printers and terminals make it possible to work without requiring paper-based documents. Each operation is now immediately registered on the system, and all labels are printed on demand. This is helping warehouse staff work more efficiently, whilst also minimising errors. We also have much better control over stock levels, the quality of work and productivity," commented Patryk Pajak. "There is dramatic reduction in the amount of paper used. Our software combined with the Zebra's mobile printing solutions is helping Wincanton to actually save forests."

The warehouse IT system implemented in Loziska is already being used to support almost all of the logistics centre's customers. Due to recent benefits Wincanton also plans to implement this system throughout its remaining Polish branches, as well as across other central European countries.

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