

Hellmann | Worldwide Logistics Relies on Printronix

Corporate Profile

In accordance with its principle of “Thinking ahead – Moving forward”, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics handles the transport of goods of all types. With 443 offices in 157 countries, the private company is one of the world’s largest providers of logistics services, and ensures fast, reliable deliveries using all means of transport in all world markets.

The services offered by the company, which was founded in 1871, range from classic freight transport by road, rail, air and sea to an extensive array of courier services, warehousing and numerous special services. The company is based in Osnabrück; the largest German sites are in Hamburg, Lehrte and Bremen.

Problem Met

Hellman uses printers in a range of application areas for smooth-running, fast and reliable flow of goods. For 20 years Hellmann has put its trust in the competence and reliability of Printronix. The company currently leverages Printronix print solutions in 20 locations, and this number is expected to increase.

The first Printronix line matrix printer was ordered in 1987 from Wien Computer Expert. It was placed in the Hellmann Worldwide Logistics headquarters in Osnabrück to enable use of the newly introduced bar code printing. Thanks to the Printronix Intelligent Graphics Printing (IGP) emulation, the P600XQ was able to produce bar code labels via the already-available Twinax-based IT system. The P6280, the oldest line matrix printer from Printronix, has been in use in Osnabrück since 1991 and is still in use today.

Hellmann currently is using 69 line matrix printers and 9 thermal bar code printers from Printronix. Following its extremely positive experience with the line matrix printers, the IT managers in the Hellmann IS systems division decided to test the suitability of Printronix thermal bar code printers for use within Hellmann. Impressed by the printers’ performance, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics also successfully uses Printronix T5000r and T4M thermal bar code printers.

The Printronix Solution

Hellmann Worldwide Logistics places great importance on increasing standardization of the IT infrastructure, including its software solutions. The site in Bremen achieves a particularly good example of wide range of application areas of Printronix printing solutions for Hellmann. Since 1988, the Bremen site has been base of operations for the handling, scheduling, warehousing, dispatch management, invoicing and sea and air freight divisions of the company. The Bremen site utilizes Printronix printers for a variety of tasks.



In the Handling division, a Printronix P5210 line matrix printer handles a variety of printing, including cartage notes, tour lists (consignment notes), unloading lists, unloading reports, customer orders and invoices. The money saved per page by using line matrix printers soon becomes apparent with the high print volumes.

In the warehouse, Hellmann uses the Printronix T5000r thermal printer to print bar codes for easy identification of product locations. In the final checking area, a bar code scanner is used to identify goods, and a delivery note is printed based on the information contained in the bar code. The goods are then palletized and prepared for dispatch. At this stage, the Printronix T4M thermal printer is used to produce EAN 128 bar code labels that include all relevant product information including logos for smooth handling in the delivery chain. Additional P5210 line matrix printers are used in dispatch management and invoicing to produce the pick lists required for transport, queries and stock lists, inventory item lists, stock level reports and statistics for full end-to-end documentation of the internal and external logistics.

In the sea freight sector, a conversion to a Citrix solution already has been implemented worldwide. This allows problem-free use of the latest Printronix printers. "One of the major advantages of Printronix is the flexibility, since the widest range of different software packages can be addressed and emulations are available for all commonly used printer languages," explains Alexander Scharnweber, who together with colleague Martin Haupt, is an IS Systems Administrator EMEA for all aspects of the Hellmann IT infrastructure in Bremen.

PrintNet Enterprise, the printer management software from Printronix, is used only in individual applications at the local level. Layout management is significantly simplified. PrintNet Enterprise offers numerous monitoring and configuration capabilities for all printers in the network on the basis of MIB 2, which allows remote management of these printers by the administrator.

Hellmann partnered with Printronix in cooperation with Wien Computer Expert, the contractual partner. The hardware was delivered and the maintenance contracts were concluded in close collaboration with the Personal Computer Organization (PCO), a 100% Hellmann subsidiary. The PCO's experience with maintenance contracts through Wien Computer Expert for Printronix printers was extremely positive: "We could be sure of establishing a smooth-running and economical solution for the customer in the medium term," explains Wolfgang Mihajlovic, PCO senior account manager of auto ID systems.

The introduction of the T4M printer model was performed by Wien computer experts. Having the next generation of RFID-capable thermal printers on-site enabled Wien to clarify all questions relating to client and printer configuration directly and to ensure problem-free installation. Since these thermal bar code printers provide all commonly used emulations, replacement of competitors' products with Printronix printers proved to be a practical step. In addition to its high reliability, the T4M offers an additional decisive advantage compared with its predecessor, significantly faster throughput. After two months Hellmann was saving up to half an hour per day on printing times.

For Hellmann, printers are an integral element of its IT and are subject to continuous development. Currently the existing IBM 6400 and Printronix 5210/5205 printers are being converted to Ethernet to allow further integration into the infrastructure. Conversion of printers that are more than 10 years old is too expensive so these printers will be replaced by new hardware. In Osnabrück, the successor to the Printronix P5000, the P7000, already is in use. In addition to faster throughput, this model has an ink ribbon with an extremely long life – up to 90 million characters. This means that the ribbon doesn't have to be replaced as often, saving the company additional time and money.

Based on the positive experience with Printronix, it seemed logical for Hellmann to put its trust in the printer specialists for its thermal printing needs. A defining factor in the purchase decision was that the T4M can be upgraded on-site to RFID. Hellmann sees numerous application areas for RFID and wanted to be prepared for a possible conversion to the technology.

Hellmann Worldwide Logistics is a member of the System Alliance packaged goods organization covering small and medium-sized logistics operators throughout Germany. The strategic objective of this alliance is to protect the future interests of small and medium-sized freight carriers by bundling the regional competence and the innovative strength of these companies. Strategic gaps which develop will be closed with new sites. Where they exist, Printronix printers will also be included in maintenance contracts. Since small sites naturally have fewer printers, it is even more important to be able to rely on competent assistance if a problem occurs since the business processes can only be ensured if prompt repair is possible.

Customer Feedback

"Based on many years of experience we can recommend the Printronix printers as robust and highly efficient machines. The printers are efficient, reliable and easy to maintain. With Wien Computer as an outstanding partner, we are guaranteed a long working life of our Printronix printers and investment protection for the company since they can quickly be adapted on-site at any time to meet new requirements."

Alexander Scharnweber
IS Systems Administrator EMEA