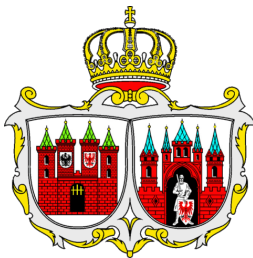




CASE STUDY:

Brandenburg an der Havel delivers enhanced services to local citizens with Ricoh



Working with Ricoh, this city administration digitises and streamlines key document workflows and consolidates its print environment, helping to cut costs, boost productivity, and improve sustainability.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Brandenburg an der Havel is a municipality near Berlin, Germany, with a population of more than 72,000 people. With 1,050 employees spread across multiple locations, the city administration increasingly focuses on e-government and digitisation to provide fast and cost-efficient citizen services.

At the city administration in Brandenburg an der Havel, employees create, manage and work with many kinds of documents. For example, around 200 administrative staff process, validate and store 30,000 incoming invoices from partners and suppliers every year. Similarly, the city maintains its own dedicated print and reprographics shop to produce correspondence to keep citizens informed about administrative matters.

Gert Walter, Head of IT at Brandenburg an der Havel, picks up: "Many of our employees work directly with citizens and generate letters and official documentation for them. Helping our teams to operate more productively and respond dynamically to citizen requests is one of our central goals."



Previously, the city administration had a highly decentralized operating model. In the office print environment, this meant users relied on many single-function desktop devices, which made managing the fleet complex and time-consuming. Tracking print volumes was difficult, while energy consumption and costs were high. Meanwhile, the city administration stored many documents in paper archives, making information retrieval highly laborious.

OBJECTIVES

Moving forwards, a key objective for Brandenburg an der Havel was consolidating the number of printers and centralising print management. This would substantially reduce the need for desktop printers and streamline printer maintenance, cut costs and optimise available resources. The city's team had to make sure that approximately 800 employees at 20 locations can print easily, at any time.

Furthermore, the administration was keen to accelerate invoice processing, as Gert Walter explains: "Managing paper invoices in house was slow and costly. It could take a week from the arrival of the invoice until it was checked and approved by all relevant people, who are often located in different offices across the city." With increasingly flexible working patterns as staff now work from home regularly, the team also aimed to find ways to increase speed and efficiency for dispatching official documents.



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Gert Walter, Head of IT



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Gert Walter, Head of IT



SOLUTIONS

To provide reliable and cost-efficient printing services for all staff and departments, Brandenburg an der Havel initiated a public tender across the European Union to find the best solution. Ricoh was selected as partner and the city administration decided to deploy powerful, shared multi-functional printers (MFPs). Brandenburg an der Havel worked with Ricoh to install 65 Ricoh IM C4500A MFPs, along with intelligent print management software providing pull print and sophisticated scan workflows.

"We can manage the MFPs through a central portal, and users can release documents from every device," explains Gert Walter. "Being able to use different printers in the same building is handy, as one printer is often being used by a colleague for a larger job." Ricoh also delivers monitoring services to identify glitches before they impact performance and availability. When necessary, Ricoh sends engineers to remedy issues.

The city administration also worked with Ricoh to automate and streamline its invoice workflows. A built-in software provided by Ricoh enables new integrated processes, so that scanned invoices are now routed directly to the administration's document management systems and processed automatically.

"Using our MFPs to digitalise invoices saves us time and money, as we can avoid having to purchase additional office hardware for scanning," adds Gert Walter.

To improve operational efficiency in its print shop, the city administration uses a single RICOH Pro™ C7210s digital press. This production printer supports high print volumes and offers the flexibility to produce a broad selection of formats and media. Being able to automatically sort, fold and envelop letters also reduces lead times for recurring print runs, allowing the city administration to dispatch items to citizens quickly.

BENEFITS

Providing shared access to powerful MFPs from Ricoh has enabled Brandenburg an der Havel to reduce its fleet of desktop printers by two thirds—from 600 down to 200. As a result, the city administration has cut its material and maintenance costs and energy consumption substantially.

Furthermore, automated invoice workflows have helped to eliminate administrative delays. "In the past, it could take a week to enter, approve, pay and archive an invoice", says Gert Walter. "Today, our workflows are much faster. Invoices are scanned, and because data entry is largely automated, they are approved and booked in just one hour. Faster payments

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improve relations with suppliers, and enable us to leverage cash discounts.”

With digital invoices stored in the document management system, it is now much quicker and easier to retrieve information. “Sometimes we need to check whether invoices are paid, such as when preparing annual accounts,” remarks Gert Walter. “Locating information in our paper archive was slow, as staff manually searched through folders. Thanks to our new workflows, we save around 0.5 FTE managing our archive.”

By consolidating its production print environment from two older systems to just a single solution, the print shop has reduced floorspace requirements by 50 percent and now also only needs one industrial air ventilation and purifier system to ensure health and safety of staff, lowering energy consumption.

The administration’s print shop is also now a driver for innovation. “With Ricoh, we’ve given remote employees the option to use our print shop to print and mail letters

directly to citizens,” says Sven Barwisch, Team Lead Technical Central Services at Brandenburg an der Havel. “Remote workers simply push a button on their laptop and our central team handles the task. This boosts back office efficiency, and accelerates delivery of items to citizens. Today we already deliver about 50 letters a day using this process and the number is constantly going up.”

The city administration has also taken positive steps to improve cost efficiency of its print operations. “We’ve worked with Ricoh to print smarter and optimise our output,” explains Sven Barwisch. “With duplex printing and sorting of letters, we reduced print output by 50 percent for certain mailings. By combining letters to the same address in a single envelope, we’ve also reduced postage fees.”

In one notable example, the city sends tax documents to property owners, which previously meant large landlords received hundreds of separate letters. To streamline this process, the city worked with Ricoh to create a paperless process, with PDFs rather than letters sent to recipients through an online file share—improving sustainability and

further cutting postage costs. Gert Walter concludes: “We have been partnering with Ricoh for many years and Ricoh has delivered great products and service. Our Ricoh contacts do a great job for us. We always know who to talk to and can find solutions together very quickly. With a single partner for MFPs and our in-house print shop, we can optimise workflows across different areas more easily and accelerate our digital transformation.”



ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services that enable individuals to work smarter from anywhere. With cultivated knowledge and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85 year history, Ricoh is a leading provider of digital services, information management, and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation and optimise business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2022, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,758 billion yen (approx. 14.5 billion USD). For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com

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