

CASE STUDY

Emmi Group



The leading Swiss dairy products company needed a solution to provide fast, reliable delivery of key business documents. LRS® software helps Emmi reduce unnecessary document costs while ensuring a safe and efficient supply chain for their time-sensitive line of products.



Organization

The Emmi Group (Emmi) is the largest milk processor and leading producer of dairy products in Switzerland. Headquartered in the central Swiss city of Lucerne, Emmi has approximately 5,000 employees worldwide and global revenues of around 5 billion Swiss Francs.

Emmi products are sold around the world and more than a quarter of all revenues come from sales in international markets. Emmi employs around 1,800 employees in overseas subsidiaries throughout Europe, North- and South America.

The importance of documents

Printed documents are used in nearly every market sector. For companies in the dairy industry, document failures can directly affect product quality.

As soon as products leave the factory and enter the supply chain, they are tracked. This is especially important with cheeses and other milk products whose flavor and texture continue to develop and change over time. Some varieties need to ripen for six to twelve months before they are ready to ship; other products will spoil if they're not consumed promptly and refrigerated every step of the way. Production documents and printed barcode stickers help Emmi employees produce a better finished product.

Distributed operations, centralized IT

Regardless of where Emmi products are produced, warehoused, or sold, nearly all of the IT systems that support these business processes are located in Emmi's main data center in Ostermundigen. Here, the IT staff maintains and supports the company's enterprise-wide business applications as well as the many Windows-based programs used by Emmi employees around the world.

The majority of Emmi's worldwide help desk personnel are also located in the Ostermundigen data center. This is the nerve center of Emmi's IT

infrastructure.

But when it came to printing, this team was dependent on Windows print servers located in dozens of remote offices and serviced by local staff.

With Microsoft print servers, it was difficult to control the entire environment. For example, when an end user printed a document, he or she had no way to know if it had arrived at the remote device. Likewise, any problem that occurred would be extremely difficult to troubleshoot. For efficient management and control of print processes, the IT staff needed the ability to monitor and control all worldwide printing from the central data center.

A single point of control

The IT team, under the direction of Walter Stadelmann, conducted a thorough review of the market offerings and issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for an enterprise-wide output management solution. After speaking with many providers, Emmi selected the VPSX® software solution from Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. (LRS).

"We looked at a lot of vendors, but LRS simply had the best solution," explains Stadelmann. Going beyond centralized print management, the team devised a way to integrate the LRS software with their existing Assentis document composition package to produce dynamic forms. In the coming years, Emmi will further expand this integration to new SAP applications. The combined solution enables output delivery to printers, email, SMS, online archives or all of these destinations simultaneously.

The LRS software not only met the company's immediate requirements, but has proven flexible enough to address their future needs.

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Lean printing infrastructure

The decision to implement VPSX software was the first step toward a complete renovation of Emmi's printing infrastructure. The goals were straightforward: simplify the complex network environment, improve output reliability, and reduce costs.

Before implementing VPSX software, Emmi routed all of their print traffic over Windows print servers. Now they have eliminated these servers and are taking advantage of the VPSX solution's ability to compress print streams and optimize network bandwidth. Though they originally implemented the solution to manage documents from ERP systems, it worked so well that they now use it to manage all Windows user printing as well.

Eliminating Windows print servers also simplified the way print drivers were handled in Emmi's environment. VPSX Print Driver Management (PDM) functionality enables the software to automatically provision the correct driver version for a given workstation. Print driver incompatibilities are a leading cause of printing problems in Windows environments, resulting in increased support costs and wasted time for end users. VPSX software helped Emmi staff avoid these expenses.

Print2Me: improved security & cost savings

Another aspect of the output management effort was the desire to consolidate the overall printer fleet. Like many companies, Emmi had a wide variety of printer makes and models installed in its remote offices. Such heterogeneous fleets lack a standard set of features and cannot take advantage of economies of scale with regard to consumable and service costs.

Working with Ricoh and LRS partner Genius Bytes, the Emmi team developed a fully integrated output management concept called "Print2Me." All output, regardless of origin, is routed to the VPSX server. Some print jobs — production orders and other time-sensitive documents, for example — are automatically routed to the appropriate printer. User-generated documents are held in a secure VPSX queue until a user swipes a security badge to release their print jobs to the nearest Ricoh multifunction device. The system can also enforce cost-saving defaults like monochrome and duplex printing.

The project helped Emmi reduce the number of devices in its printing fleet by 40%. "It was a long process to eliminate all the single-user devices," Walter Stadelmann recalls. "But the effort now helps us save over 100,000 Francs per year while improving the productivity of users and IT staff alike."



Precise planning — perfect printing

Assisting the Emmi IT team was Dietmar Neidhardt, a Senior Software Consultant from LRS' Munich office. "Emmi's implementation shows the flexibility of the LRS solution and its ability to seamlessly integrate with established customer environments. During an onsite consulting project, we enhanced the basic VPSX functionality to provide highly-tailored, customer-specific process integration. The resulting solution provides full print status monitoring at every stage of output delivery from the originating application to the output device."

This customization enabled the LRS solution to update output job parameters based on values in the Emmi database, create dynamic document watermarks, and simultaneously deliver output in both printer- and archive-ready form. "For the finishing touch, we added the ability to automatically analyze and categorize any print problem that occurred, attach the relevant log data, and create a Help desk ticket," explains Neidhardt.

Herr Stadelmann has a simpler way to describe the solution: "It just works."