

**Business Partner**



## **MDL Success Story**

### **More than a Label**

**Europe's largest trading group chose Advanced Volume Printing, BarDIMM and specialised media to enhance HP LaserJet printers and improve the efficiency and ergonomoy of their logistics.**

Metro Distributionslogistik (MDL) provides the logistical backbone for more than 2000 outlets of Europe's biggest trading group, Metro AG. The efficiency and productivity of MDL's operation depends on the speed and ergonomoy of their printing process. When it was time to update their printing hardware and applications, MDL chose HP LaserJet printers and solutions to take them into the future.

### **A Process Dependent**

Each MDL shipment is communicated to the warehouse as a sheet of labels. The labels tell the warehouse personnel where to find the articles, how many are required, and for which shipment and customer the products are intended. The label also contains other product, pricing and accounting information for the customer, but it is their legibility and usability in the warehouse that has the greatest impact on how quickly shipments can be assembled and dispatched.

### **Needed: Fast Label Printing with Standard Laser Printers**

Until recently, every MDL warehouse was using rolls of pre-printed labels and high-speed impact printers, connected directly to the mainframe, to provide for this important link in the distribution chain. At the dawn of a new millennium, and with rapid growth in the Metro AG Group, the system was out-dated, expensive and inefficient. So, when they were changing their label-printing application, MDL decided to use the opportunity to change from impact printers to modern laser printer technology. HP LaserJet printers were the obvious choice for their high quality and reliability, but the throughput needed (up to 100 pages a minute) and the required stationery presented problems.

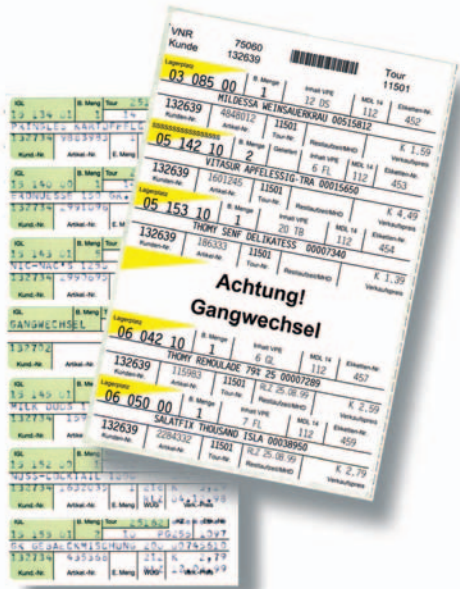
This was where the German partner, s.a.x. Software, entered the picture. While Hewlett-Packard worked with Avery Dennison to produce A4 label stationery that worked well at the high temperatures involved in laser printing, s.a.x. worked with the HP customer team to implement an Advanced Volume Printing (AVP) solution.



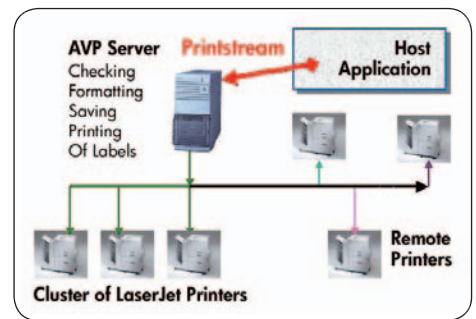
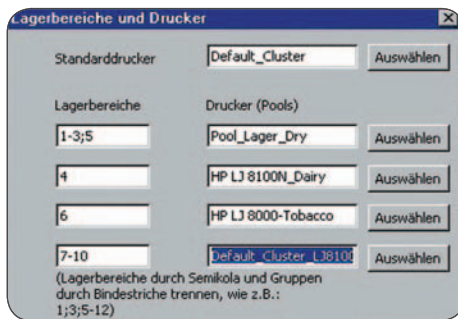
Printed on an HP Colour LaserJet Printer

**METRO AG**

## Available Solutions



## Solutions in Practice



First of all, the AVP (also known as the Formserver) means that LaserJets can be clustered together to provide the **printing volume** needed (up to five HP 8100s in a warehouse for MDL). But no less important is AVP's ability to **format and fill** the labels. This makes pre-printed labels superfluous, as the AVP can print the "fixed" with the variable information. The benefit of this approach is that the "fixed" information can now be changed to suit the different types of labels required without complicating the printing process (using the impact printers, a single label design had to fulfill the differing requirements of ten different kinds of shipment).

AVP also provides printer queue and paper management. Queue management makes sure that the higher **priority** jobs are printed first. Paper handling makes sure that the different parts of the print job are printed on the appropriate stationery, and are **sorted** correctly at the output and **stapled** together, ready to be picked up. The quality and capabilities of the HP LaserJet printers have been used to improve the **usability** of the labels. By using different fonts, styles and sizes, as well as printing in black and gray, the warehouse personnel can find and read the information they need more quickly – particularly relevant given the large amount of temporary and casual staff. In addition, by adding a BarDIMM to each of the printers, the labels can now include **barcodes**, to further improve efficiency.

Finally, LAN cards in the printers mean that they are addressed over a standard TCP/IP network, reducing the amount of hardware necessary compared with channel printing.

### Achieved:

#### Elimination of costs, Reduction of maintenance, Increased productivity

Metro Distributionslogistik started rolling out the new labeling application and printing hardware in the second half of 1999. So far, apart from the elimination of the costs of pre-printing, and the reduction of print maintenance and running costs, the legibility and usability of the new labels have meant an important increase in productivity. The remaining warehouses in Germany will be equipped with the new system in 2000, and after that the warehouses in the other European countries.

For a company with an increasing workload as part of a rapidly growing group, s.a.x. solutions have made an important contribution to MDL's productivity, by helping them use their printing process to cut costs and boost efficiency on a daily basis.

For further information please contact  
s.a.x. at  
<http://www.sax.ltd.uk>

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The UK Partner for Hewlett-Packard  
Corporate Printing Solutions



s.a.x. Limited  
s.a.x. House, 3 Jenner Road  
Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 9GA, UK  
Telephone: 0870 777 6496  
Fax: 0870 777 6497  
e-mail: [info@sax.ltd.uk](mailto:info@sax.ltd.uk)  
Internet: <http://www.sax.ltd.uk>