

QVC | Distribution Center Employs Continuous Thermal Printing from Printronix

Corporate Profile | Customers trust in quality and reliability

QVC is Germany's number one choice for teleshopping. The secret of the company's success is perfectly coordinated logistics. To meet increasing demands, QVC expanded its distribution center at Hückelhoven and added the latest in logistics technology. The expanded distribution center now is the most sophisticated in Europe.

QVC's logistics department has a complex, customer-optimized IT system to ensure the highest level of customer service possible. This customer-centric process is visible with every order customers receive, including via the shipping label. To print the labels for the approximately 14 million packages that leave its Hückelhoven distribution center each year, QVC has trusted the performance and reliability of Printronix's T5000r thermal printers. Currently, QVC uses 315 T5000r printers.

Problem Met | Printing on the run

The Hückelhoven distribution center ships approximately 40,000 packages every day. The shipping labels include the customer's address, internal routing requirements and instructions to QVC's logistics service provider, Hermes. QVC is concerned about keeping the customer as happy as possible, which means optimizing packages at the packing stage and delivering products as soon as possible.

Ordering and Packing Thermal Labels

The orders are downloaded everyday at midnight from the call centers, merged to the warehouse management system, and then sent for picking and packing where workers package the customers' orders and bundle them. The Hückelhoven computer center then generates orders and invoices. Once the products are picked and packed, workers print invoices and shipping labels at the same time.

QVC needed a complete printing solution to create accurate invoices and shipping labels. In addition, QVC required a print system that would integrate easily with existing networks and software solutions. Since QVC uses 250 Printronix T5000r printers in its distribution center already, it was a natural choice to continue using the printers they trust.

"We decided on Printronix printers when we first opened the center in 2003 because they stood out for their flexibility in use, reliability in continuous operation and outstanding price-performance ratio," said Michael Meyer, senior manager of operations, QVC.

Printronix Solution | One of the largest Printronix T5000r installations in Europe

Printronix's thermal printers are integrated with the Windows-based Ethernet network. QVC's warehouse system tells the print server what text information is required. Then the server turns this into the appropriate label layout and sends the information to the printer. The T5000r then prints and dispenses the label and the worker applies the label to the package. The T5000r has the option to use a rewinder which collects the label liner back into the printer. QVC uses the rewinder for easy disposal and increased convenience, efficiency and safety.



The label printers are managed and controlled via PrintNet Enterprise, Printronix's printer management software. For the large number of Printronix printers on the network, PrintNet Enterprise offers many control and configuration options administrators can control remotely.

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QVC worked with Printronix technology partner Wien Computer Expert of Norderstedt for the implementation. "We have to be able to rely on our printers working 100 percent at business-critical points, so we need a reliable partner," Meyer said. "Wien Computer Expert's staff are proactive and skilled troubleshooting specialists. This is why we have come to rely on Wien Computer Expert and why they will be there as partner to our Printronix-trained staff in the future too."

QVC has 315 Printronix thermal bar code printers installed at workstations in its packing department. "We're very proud that one of our largest T5000r printer installations in Europe is at one of the most modern distribution centers in Europe," said Holger Steer, area sales manager for Germany, Printronix. "Germany's largest teleshopping provider trusts in the reliability of our products because they are easily integrated into any IT system. They are designed for rigorous printing situations and have continued to produce accurate print jobs at QVC since their first installation in 2003."

Printronix printers are highly flexible when it comes to integrating with existing IT systems. QVC's dispatch department uses Printronix's own IGP/PGL programming language, while its returns department runs Zebra's ZPL programming language. This difference in printer language is not a problem because the Printronix T5000r uses emulations for seamless printing between departments.

"We provide the QVC team with the highest level of customer service," said Frank Wien, managing director, Wien Computer Expert GmbH. "QVC often comes to us with specific questions regarding fault reports and we can guarantee a swift answer because we work closely with Printronix. It's important to us that we guarantee the printers we install run smoothly. After all, every label not printed because of maintenance issues is extremely expensive."

Customer Feedback | Strategic Decision

"We only recommend Printronix because of its robust, high-performance printers. Printronix printers stand out for their performance, reliability and ease of maintenance. The printers we bought five years ago are still working perfectly. Printronix has kept its promises – a long product life and safe investment. It's a great reason to keep trusting in Printronix!"

Michael Meyer
Senior Manager Operation Services

About QVC

QVC Germany is among the most successful German Tele-shopping companies with a market share of more than 50 percent. The company produced a net turnover of € 624m in Financial Year 2007. QVC offers to their customers on average 18,000 products in the categories of home, jewelry, lifestyle and beauty and fashion. Buyers and trend-scouts are searching constantly for new innovative products for the unique QVC selection. QVC was recently awarded the titles "Customer Champion of Germany 2008" and "Most Customer Friendly Supplier of Germany 2007" by the business magazine Impulse. Furthermore, QVC is one of only five companies in Germany to have received the TÜV-Siegel "Tested Service" with excellence. For further information, visit www.qvc.de.

About Wien Computer Experts GmbH

The system house Wien Computer Experts GmbH is one of the prominent system houses in printing, bar code and radio data transmission. As the organizer of the "Northern Germany RFID Day," Wien Computer has established a RFID network for the northern region. The center of the system house is conveniently located on the outskirts of Hamburg, in Norderstedt and numerous Wien service partners are at the disposal to their customers all over Germany. There are already more than 3,000 printing systems of different versions installed country wide. In addition to line matrix and thermal printers, the system house developed some of the first RFID solutions. Wien Computer works in co-operation with software houses to offer customized solutions in SAP R2/R3 range, as well as comprehensive Wi-Fi solutions. Further information, visit www.wien-computer.de.

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About Printronix Inc.

Since 1974, Printronix Inc. has created innovative printing solutions for the industrial marketplace and supply chain. The company is the worldwide market leader in enterprise solutions for line matrix printing and has earned an outstanding reputation for its high-performance thermal bar code and fanfold laser printing solutions. Printronix also has become an established leader in pioneering technologies, including radio frequency identification (RFID) printing, bar code compliance and networked printer management. Printronix is headquartered in Irvine, Calif. For company information, see www.primtronix.com.

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