

Smooth Sailing for Hybrid Mail

Success Story | Compart



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The Deutsche Bahn has moved its internal communications over to a hybrid mail solution. The principle: employees decide for themselves whether they want to produce documents digitally or in hard copy. The technology is based on the "ePostSelect" system developed by Swiss Post Solutions; it works as a profile database and dispatcher for mailing.

The German railway system, Deutsche Bahn, employs approx. 280,000 employees worldwide. It is therefore easy to imagine the volume of documentation they produce alone internally. Just think of the monthly salary slips sitting as download files on a virtual employee portal. The problem is that very few employees use it. Some do not have regular Internet access, while others prefer the conventional mail route. The portal is therefore hardly a credible digital alternative to physical mail. Employees unwilling or unable to use it receive their pay slips in their mailbox at home, just as they always have.

The railway company was therefore in search of an "active" hybrid mail solution that would reach all employees, regardless of their IT requirements or preferences. It should be a platform that works with various digital channels and still offers the option of a hardcopy mailing if the recipient so desires. The employees' existing email addresses should serve as the basis, without the separate accounts that many standard digital mail solutions use.

If Not by Email, Then by Letter

They chose "ePostSelect", a system developed by Swiss Post Solutions (SPS), in which the recipient selects the distribution channel. The basic principle of this hybrid mail solution is that every document, regardless of format, is generated reliably and verifiably without the sender or recipient having to change their existing infrastructure. "ePostSelect" works as a virtual

dispatcher that receives documents as print data and then prepares it for the appropriate channels, depending on the recipient's preference. The sender need not make expensive changes to existing OM structures, which unnecessarily ties up resources. By linking the email and home address, the system guarantees every communication will reach its destination, if not via an electronic route, then a physical one.

Executive Summary

This full-service provider of Swiss Post (Swiss Post Solutions) sees itself as the „interface between physical and electronic communication.“ Appropriately, the SPS portfolio is widely diversified. In addition to products, solutions and services for example customer relations (loyalty, payback programs, including card production, points administration, in-bound/out-bound telephony), finance (billing, statements) and marketing (mailings, campaigns), the company also focuses on document and output management. SPS offers not only traditional printing services, including transpromo and white-space marketing, but also solutions for hybrid mailing and incorporating electronic communication channels such as IncaMail and ePostSelect.

SPS has particular expertise in optimizing overall workflows in document production. Connecting the physical and the digital is always involved. The development of forward-looking strategies and the implementation of operational business models is of primary importance.

As a division of Swiss Post, the global company employs approx. 6,400 worldwide. Swiss Post Solutions (SPS) has representatives in 16 countries, with its core markets in Europe and the USA. In 2011 the company generated turnover of 549 million Swiss francs (CHF).

Document Delivery at the Deutsche Bahn

"ePostSelect" offers workflows that leave the delivery path for any type of document completely up to the sender and recipient. Even sensitive legal documents, whose delivery must be documented, can be sent using "ePostSelect". Data security is assured by the patented SAFE technology. IncaMail, an electronic mail solution developed by SPS, has a high encryption standard that prevents unauthorized access to document content. Furthermore, SPS production centers are certified by ISO 27001 and PCI DSS (security standard for credit card companies), offering one of the highest security standards available.

Multi-Culti Dispatch

It was this outstanding degree of data protection that won over management and the Works Council at Deutsche Bahn. One of the main requirements for the new system was that employees' private email addresses be stored externally and not within the company itself. Also key to the selection of "ePostSelect" was its internationality.



It is not limited to specific e-delivery offers of individual countries, but open for all channels. This is a major criterion for the railway, since the majority of its employees work outside Germany. Furthermore, IncaMail is a secure mail solution that can be deployed internationally.

The Deutsche Bahn began to introduce "ePost Select" in January 2012. Meanwhile most of the employees are tied into the system and acceptance of the digital channel is steadily growing. Soon it will be used for other processes that allow for an immediate digital response. One example might be processing of job ticket requests for railway employee travel passes. In future each employee will receive a pre-filled request (active online form). The employee then completes or confirms the form, sending structured data back to the system. This eliminates physically processing the requests using a scanner or OCR reader. Other scenarios are easy to envision.

All Formats Can be Processed

"ePostSelect" technology is based in part on DocBridge Pilot, a platform-independent software product that bundles documents of any format for cost-optimized mailing and prepares them for output over various physical and digital channels. The principle: the import of the documents to be processed is kept separate from the output of the mailings. The software developed by Compart, a provider of multi-channel document management systems, copies the data and converts it while retaining the file format. At this stage, the document can be modified, distributed, classified, indexed, and converted into different formats. This enables documents to be displayed, printed, archived and further processed virtually anywhere. The information for this process is extracted as metadata. While the software assigns the data to a central pool, the metadata is stored in a relational database.

This feature provided by Compart is also important in the "ePostSelect" project at Deutsche Bahn. The software takes the sender's print data and prepares it for recipient-specific output, i.e. the right channel. "ePostSelect", that is DocBridge Pilot, automatically decides whether a document should be sent as an email

attachment (PDF), encrypted (using IncaMail), or in print form. The system takes the recipient's home address from the document and combines it with the stored email address, if available. This automatically generates a query to the integrated profile database for the recipient's preferred method of receipt, digital or physical. If electronic mail is not selected, the document is sent via regular mail. In this case a note is added to the document informing the recipient that future mail can also be sent via IncaMail. But the final decision remains with the employee.

Powerful Alliance for Multichannel-Capable Output Management

One of Compart's long-term collaborators, Docucom, also contributed to the project. This systems company is one of Switzerland's leading suppliers of integration solutions for document processing. For "ePostSelect", Docucom made the customer-specific adaptations and modifications to DocBridge Pilot and custom-designed a user interface to meet SPS and Deutsche Bahn requirements.

Docucom had already successfully completed numerous projects with Swiss Post Solutions, particularly in the area of conversion and formatting. So it was obvious that Compart and this OM specialist join forces in developing «ePostSelect». Urs Fischer, Head of Security & Identity Products at SPS: «For years we have known Compart as a proven expert for format-independent and multi-channel optimization of data streams. So this three-pronged alliance is ideal for implementing such a complex and visionary project as ePostSelect.» Fischer added that Compart provides innovative and powerful products and Docucom proven know-how in integration and project management.

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