

Customer Case

Utility company outsources print using *Citizen Communication Management service*

Stadtwerke Solingen

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When Stadtwerke Solingen's in-plant print centre reached maximum capacity, Ricoh suggested an innovative solution. Transactional print was outsourced to Ricoh's European Document Centre. Ricoh added value, printing colourful trans-promotional messages on the customer-facing documents and pre-sorting them to take advantage of discounted mail rates.



In-plant print centre

Stadtwerke Solingen is a regional utility provider. The company supplies energy and transportation services and in 2013 turned over €325 million. The German energy market is highly competitive and customers can easily switch from one supplier to another. Stadtwerke Solingen's success is built upon a strong regional presence, its customer-centric focus and green energy credentials.

The utility company maintains regular contact with its customers, communicating initiatives and promoting services via its website and in print. Stadtwerke Solingen has its own in-plant print centre and uses Ricoh production technology to produce high-quality, customer-facing marketing collateral, such as brochures and promotional mailers, and transactional documents, such as invoices and statements.

Adding colour impact

Changes in demand prompted a review of the company's in-plant print service. Growing demand for print collateral meant that the in-plant facility was operating at maximum capacity. There was an urgent need to increase capacity and reduce lead times. At the same time, Stadtwerke Solingen was keen to improve the impact and appeal of its customer-facing collateral by making more use of colour.

Conscious that simply adding more equipment to the existing facility would impact on space, headcount and cost, Ricoh proposed an innovative solution. Ricoh would provide a managed off-site print service to supplement the in-plant facility. The Citizen Communication Management service is fast, flexible and cost effective. It has enabled the utility to expand its print capacity without making additional investment.

Objectives

- Increase print capacity
- Reduce lead time
- Enhance marketing appeal
- Maintain data security
- Avoid increase in headcount

Results

- Responsive managed service
- Unlimited overflow capacity
- 24-hour process turnaround
- High impact, on-brand messaging
- Lower mailing costs



Ricoh understood our situation and offered a flexible, cost-saving solution. We can continue to maximise use of our in-house print facilities whilst outsourcing overflow demand to Ricoh's European Document Centre."

Marc Nothen
Stadtwerke Solingen

Managed off-site service

Ricoh's European Document Centre in Brackenheim, Germany, processes more than one million customer documents every day. Operating 24 hours a day, the centre ensures fast turnaround of urgent communication. Using a vast array of automated production equipment, Ricoh's European Document Centre is able to add value to print, whilst minimising processing costs.

Stadtwerke Solingen's transactional documents - its invoices, statements and reminders - are now processed at Ricoh's European Document Centre. The transactional data forwarded by the utility company is processed overnight and printed ready for dispatch the following day. Ricoh prints the documents in colour, enhancing their appeal and helping trans-promotional messaging stand out.

Ricoh provides an end-to-end service for Stadtwerke Solingen. The utility company's documents are pre-sorted to take advantage of postal discounts. They are then folded, inserted into envelopes and franked ready for collection by the mail distributor. To ensure 100% accuracy, a closed loop camera system tracks every document through the production process.

Mailsort postal discounts

Stadtwerke Solingen was naturally anxious to ensure that its customers' personal data was handled in compliance with European data privacy laws. Ricoh ensures confidentiality and security by maintaining data within an SAS 70-compliant infrastructure. Ricoh is, moreover, the only document management company to hold global ISO 27001 accreditation, the international standard for information security.

Ricoh's European Document Centre is able to react instantly to peaks in demand, providing what is in effect an unlimited overflow print capacity for the utility company. Mailsort postal discounts have offset the cost of adding colour to transactional print, enabling Stadtwerke Solingen to improve the quality and effectiveness of its customer communication, without increasing processing costs.

Ricoh is even helping Stadtwerke Solingen strengthen its environmental credentials, reducing the utility company's carbon footprint by neutralising all carbon emissions related to the transactional print process. The colourful, high impact invoices and statements processed by Ricoh for Stadtwerke Solingen are independently certified as 100% carbon neutral.

Solution

- Outsource transactional print
- Managed end-to-end service
- Industrialised production processes
- Colour trans-promotional messaging
- Mailsort postal discounts

Benefits

- Reactive and scalable service
- Secure data handling
- 100% carbon neutral transactional print
- Release of in-plant resource
- Significant cost saving

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