

PlanetPress®

OL™ Software

SOLUTION IN ACTION

Transformation of dispatch operations and reduction of paper-based processes

- BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

- INCREASE OF EFFICIENCY

- NO TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE NEEDED

- IMPROVED CASH FLOW

The steel industry and shipment documents: a good example of dealing with high volumes

Every day the European division for this major global steel producer makes hundreds of business-critical product shipments to its customers. This process was being hampered by its old dispatch document process. The company was having to use 15-year-old dot matrix printers and costly, specially-made paper. But a PlanetPress Solution has transformed the dispatch operation, making it easier to manage, more flexible and less costly.



About the company

Established over a hundred years ago, this organisation is among the top ten global steel companies and is one of the world's most geographically-diversified steel producers, with operations in 26 countries and a commercial presence in over 50 countries.

Before PlanetPress:

The challenge of producing dispatch documents

The European division of the company, headquartered in the UK, is a leading Europe steel producer. It manufactures a variety of raw steel and steel component products for distribution across Europe, as well as worldwide, for use in industries such as automotive, construction, energy and power, aerospace, shipbuilding and rail.

One of the company's downstream business divisions produces an extensive range of welded tube products, such as structural hollow sections, large diameter pipes and pressure tubes. These products are manufactured at the company's manufacturing plant in the Midlands and a key part of the organisation's business operation is product distribution. This relies on producing and printing complex documents for each of the 100 product shipments made every day. Previously, the dispatch documents comprised multiple parts and multiple copies for the customer, the haulier and the company itself. Information for these documents comes from the company's real-time manufacturing execution system.

Dispatch documentation had to be printed on to special duplicate, four-sheet paper stock due to the interface into the manufacturing management system. This kind of paper is no longer in general use, so the organisation had it specially made at some considerable expense. Only the company's two legacy dot matrix printers could print on paper this thick but, at 15 years old, they were unreliable, difficult to maintain and obsolete.

The IT Solutions Delivery Manager for the steel manufacturer says, "Obviously, we'd looked at replacing the dot matrix kit with modern printers and standard laser printer paper. But our typical dispatch loads require documents that are ten pages long, which would have meant either uneconomical changes to our computer system or drivers and weighbridge teams having to sign up to 40 separate documents. So we had to stick with the dot matrix printers. That was until a chance conversation with Objectif Lune." The company was in discussion with us about a dispatch document problem. We suggested we might have a solution that would allow the manufacturer to replace the legacy printers and paper and make dispatch documentation simpler to manage.

« We'd researched lots of different options and products - some of which would have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. But we chose the Objectif Lune solution because there really wasn't anything else on the market or as cost effective to meet our very specific challenge »

IT Solutions Delivery
Manager
International steel
manufacturer



The implementation of PlanetPress

We proposed using PlanetPress Suite management software as well as two Multifunction Products (MFPs) from one of our partners, to replace the old dot matrix printers and digital pens at dispatch points and weighbridge stations. PlanetPress integrates with the company's computer system so that data, such as customer details, product types and delivery information, can be processed and then printed out as delivery documents. PlanetPress is able to grab data from different information sources and present it in a variety of ways in documents.

"We'd researched lots of different options and products - some of which would have cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. But we chose the Objectif Lune solution because there really wasn't anything else on the market or as cost effective to meet our very specific challenge," says the IT Solutions Delivery Manager.

On the Operations side : decrease the number of copies

One of the critical features of the solution was the PlanetPress Capture module which supports the use of digital pens. This meant that dispatch staff could capture a signature once and then replicate it across multiple parts of the document. Not only did this help remove the need for drivers to sign lots of copies, it also meant the company could stop using the expensive duplicate paper and therefore replace the aging dot matrix printers.

Our PlanetPress application integrated easily within the company's existing IT infrastructure and is very intuitive. For example, it can make decisions based on information in a document, such as identifying a UK or international load and then printing off the appropriate type of document. Many delivery drivers are foreign and may not speak English very well. PlanetPress identify when a driver might need documentation in a different language, which is particularly important for safety information that is required by law at industrial locations.

Their favorite aspect of PlanetPress? Efficiency: no more copies and duplicate paper!

Now, on the application side: simple and easy-to-manage

PlanetPress has provided the manufacturer with a simple and easy-to-manage application that takes data from the computer system, manipulates and organises that data in a flexible way and then prints it in multiple and customisable formats. This has enabled the company to improve processes and to replace old, inefficient equipment with modern Ricoh MFPs, using standard, low-cost paper.

What it means for customers: better communication

Customers have noticed an improvement in dispatch operations and now the organisation is getting a lot of positive feedback about more efficient processes, better documentation and real-time information. Once delivery documentation is complete and printed out, the system produces an electronic, searchable pdf copy of the information, which is then archived. At the same time, an automatic email is sent to the customer so that they get full visibility of delivery information. This provides a real-time alert that the delivery is on its way and provides the information instantly, instead of when the delivery arrives.



"There was a very strong business case for bringing in the Objectif Lune solution. Delivering products to customers is a critical business operation. If we can't dispatch, we can't invoice and when we can't invoice we don't get paid. Using PlanetPress to transform and streamline dispatch processing has been a significant benefit to the company and its customers."

IT Solutions Delivery
Manager
International steel
manufacturer





The Benefits

The steel manufacturer has reduced its costs through more efficient, reliable print equipment and resources. The saving that the company has made, just by replacing its special duplicate paper with standard stock, has paid for the entire Ricoh solution in nine months. Additional cost savings, just on paper, include replacing special weighbridge ticket paper and site permit booklets with standard laser printer paper. Customers have noticed an improvement in dispatch operations and now the organisation is getting a lot of positive feedback about more efficient processes, better documentation and real-time information.

- **Transforms dispatch operations with efficient, easy-to-manage document processing**
- **Delivers a 9-month ROI just by replacing specialist dot matrix paper with standard stock**
- **Ensures customers get better, real-time information resulting in positive customer feedback**
- **Allows old dot matrix printers and paper to be replaced with more efficient, low-cost resources**
- **Enables a raft of additional process and efficiency improvements**

« Everybody wins: our daily activities are getting more efficient and our clients can benefit from improved documents. »

IT Solutions Delivery
Manager
International steel
manufacturer

Looking ahead

Following the success of the Objectif Lune solution, the steel manufacturer is now looking at rolling out the same solution to around six other sites across the UK. One of the big benefits of the solution is that the company does not need to buy or deploy multiple copies of PlanetPress. Each site simply becomes an extension of the central system, making roll out to other sites easy and cost effective.

About... PlanetPress®

PlanetPress is a flexible solution that relies on corporate data to automate document-related processes and optimise communications with clients. Our solution is adaptable and compatible with any database, ERP/CRM or equivalent systems, for total control of your IT infrastructure. PlanetPress handles the automation of processes such as the creation, distribution and archiving of transactional documents.

PlanetPress®

OL™ Software

planetpress.objectiflune.com

OL is a trademark of Objectif Lune Inc.
All registered trademarks displayed are the property of their respective owners.
© 2015 Objectif Lune Incorporated. All rights reserved.

