



CASE STUDY:

Logistics company engages Ricoh to develop more innovative and efficient supply chain operations



Logistics company deploys Smart Lockers to store business critical devices, increase employee productivity and strengthen key client relationships

COMPANY CHALLENGE

This international logistics company aims to process shipping orders as quickly and efficiently as possible to ensure goods reach their destination on time, every time. With distribution centre work shifts running around the clock, how could the company make the most of every second and improve quality of service to clients?



OBJECTIVES

In busy, high-throughput distribution centres, staff rely on a multitude of electronic devices: hand-held terminals, mobile label printers, radios, headsets and more. Despite the operational importance of this equipment, the company lacked standard asset management processes. For example, some sites tasked an employee with distributing and collecting devices, while at other locations workers collected items from and returned items to charging racks throughout the distribution centres.

These processes caused several headaches. Firstly, locating the right equipment rack took time, and manual handout processes created lengthy queues for workers, both of which delayed the start of work on client orders. Furthermore, without established processes for gathering, storing and caring for the devices, the company could not monitor and control loss or damage, leading to heavy replacement and repair costs.

Finally, human nature would lead staff to 'squirrel away' equipment for their personal use by storing devices in unusual locations, causing managers to lose sight of how many devices were available on-site.

The company looked for a way to increase control over business-critical devices, accelerate the shift distribution and collection processes, and eliminate the delays to starting work. Ultimately, caring for the headsets and hand-held devices would enable the company to serve customers better.

"Working with Ricoh to introduce Smart Lockers to our distribution centres is helping us to optimize our operational processes. We expect that the combination of time savings, enhanced productivity, and reduced asset repair and replacement costs will generate a very strong return on investment, and enable us to deliver a higher quality service to clients"

Logistics Company Spokesperson



SOLUTIONS

The company realized that centralising device storage was critical, incorporating a standardised check-in/check-out routine. This would enable them to understand which devices were used most frequently, monitor equipment performance, and manage availability, distribution and maintenance.

Smart Lockers fitted the brief perfectly, providing a combination of innovative cloud technologies, high-security functionality, and sophisticated asset tracking tools. The company engaged its global technology partner Ricoh to deploy, install, and configure custom-branded Apex Smart Lockers at one location in France and three in the UK.

At the start and end of shifts, workers now present a unique keycard to the Smart Locker to access and return devices. This easy-to-use self-service model removes the waiting time as an employee finds and hands out devices, and eliminates the hunt for the right device at charging racks. The system also insists that the same worker returns the same assets, encouraging more responsible working practices.

Every Smart Locker transaction is recorded in a cloud-based data repository, giving site managers round-the-clock visibility into which workers are using specific assets. Furthermore, site managers can run data analytics to establish audit trails and generate reports into usage patterns, which will help to monitor asset condition and plan effective maintenance windows.

BENEFITS

With the Smart Lockers in place, the company expects to reduce per-shift asset collection times by up to 15 minutes, enabling employees to spend more time working productively on processing shipping orders for clients. Being able to make the most of every minute of the shift will prove especially useful during periods of peak demand, such as Black Friday and the run up to Christmas.

Greater control over the business-critical devices and standardised processes for collection and return will help to improve asset condition and increase lifespan, reducing the company's repair and replacement costs.

The cutting-edge Smart Lockers will also allow the company to demonstrate to current and prospective clients its commitment to building more efficient and sustainable supply chain processes. Embracing the most innovative and advanced logistics tools will help to win more tenders and fulfill existing contracts.

The Smart Lockers are also enabling the company to create a safe working environment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Contactless asset distribution reduces the risk of transmission, while audit trails allow tracking of employees that have handled devices used by anyone that has tested positive for the virus.

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services enabling individuals to work smarter. For more than 80 years, Ricoh has been driving innovation and is a leading provider of document management solutions, IT services, communication services, commercial and industrial printing, digital cameras, and industrial systems.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group operates in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2020, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 19.06 billion USD.

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