Heron Readers are Pivotal in Mail Order Delivery and Processing at DHL - Datalogic

DHL is the world's premier global delivery network who has transformed express shipping in one country after another. Over 220 countries and territories later, DHL is the global market leader of the international express and logistics industry.

DHL ServicePoint uses Datalogic's Heron™ Desk Bar Code Readers for Customer Package Pick Up and Return

Overview

DHL is the world's premier global delivery network who has transformed express shipping in one country after another. Over 220 countries and territories later, DHL is the global market leader of the international express and logistics industry. The company specializes in providing customers with innovative and customized transportation solutions from a single source.

The Challenge

Time wasted from "not home" deliveries became the catalyst for a new solution from DHL called "ServicePoint," which allows customers to personally pick up and return their packages. For this system to work, network participants make use of a web-based application and a bar code handheld reader to process the parcels.

Within one year, 370 locations opened, resulting in 75% of all households in the Netherlands within a four kilometer distance from the nearest DHL ServicePoint. Pioneering this practice, the Netherlands became the first European country where DHL ServicePoints are active on a major scale.

During the setup of the pick up and return point locations, ServicePoint works closely with companies such as Videoland and Praxis. "The beauty of the concept is the interaction that exists: many of the people that come in to pick up their package at Videoland also use the opportunity to rent a video for example," Ko de Kort, a DHL ServicePoint Regional Manager explains.

Another advantage is that most of the stores with a ServicePoint have extended their hours, which means a customer can pick up packages until late in the evening.

To be selected as a ServicePoint location, the enterprise must meet a few requirements: the location must be easily accessible with sufficient opening hours, plenty of parking and space to store the parcels.

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The Solution

Before the consumer can pick up their package, the following processes have already been completed: When an order is placed with a mail order company, the parcel is first received in the ServicePoint warehouse in Utrecht where it is sorted and sent to a local depot. Then, the parcel is delivered to a ServicePoint somewhere in the country.

At the ServicePoint, a customer specific bar code on the parcel is scanned. If the reader shows a green light indicating a 'good match,' then the DPST (Drop Point Shipping Tool) invokes a web based program from DHL and a message for the person who placed the order is created. This message is sent to the customer via SMS, e-mail or even voicemail. The same applies for package returns, just in reverse.

Before the DPST software was introduced into the ServicePoint concept, it was extensively tested at DHL in Praag. Once the program had proved itself, a fake service point location was created and a virtual test was performed from the Netherlands.

De Kort: "The problem was that we never had a bar code reader good enough to dispatch the parcels." By coincidence, he discovered that Vierpool, a bar code scanner supplier, was located close to the DHL Service Point headquarters in Utrecht. Vierpool recommended Datalogic's Heron™ Desk handheld reader; however, before purchasing, DHL headquarters demanded a performance competition between different handheld reader manufacturers be completed. After a competitive race against other bar code scanning manufacturers, Datalogic's Heron D was determined to be the best fit for DHL and Vierpool was awarded a contract to deliver the first 400 Heron handheld readers.

The Results

After installation of the first batch of readers, Ko de Kort stated that the users of the service points are extremely satisfied with the new devices and the Heron readers "work perfectly and we have not yet had a failure." The company has remained impressed with the scanners accurate and high first-pass read rate as well as with Datalogic's patented 'Green Spot' technology, which indicates good-read feedback to the device operator.

For the future, Ko De Kort explained, "There will soon be a second release of the DPST which includes improvements to the login process, the ability to do multiple returns and a reduction of a number of administrative tasks. The next step is that both the service point and the consumer will service SMB businesses since they too can deliver so-called cash and ad-hoc shipments at the DHL Service Points."

Ko de Kort has already offered a new idea to even better serve the customer during the processing of their order. "In the future we will probably send an SMS to the customer's mobile phone which will

include the bar code for their package. At the service point, the scanner will then simply read the bar code directly from the mobile phone display."

Customer

DHL ServicePoint

Industry

Transportation & Logistics

Sub-Industry

Mail Courier Services

Application

Document Handling

Country

The Netherlands

Datalogic Product

Heron™ Desk

Datalogic Partner

Vierpool

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