



A new and improved way of printing for 500 travel agencies

A German travel agency group has streamlined document printing across 500 sites with the new mono laser Brother HL-L6400DW printer. Booking a holiday these days usually starts on the internet, but many people still prefer to finalise their plans with the help of expert advice and guidance. Travel agencies have adapted to this, offering a mix of online services and in-person consultancy.

For DER, one of the leading travel agency groups in Germany, printed documents are an important part of the customer experience. These documents come in all shapes and sizes – forms, tickets, hotel descriptions, summaries – and have to be prepared fast, at high quality and without hassle.

Flying blind: unknown printing habits and needs

Ensuring the 500 individual travel agencies and their 2000 employees can print efficiently at all times has been a challenge for the IT team at DER's headquarters in Frankfurt. Print costs and volumes could only ever be estimated, maintenance and toner supply happened on a purely reactive basis.

Sascha Karbginski, Head of IT at DER, summarises the challenge: "We were flying completely blind in terms of our employees' print behaviour, making it difficult to support them effectively."

As part of a group-wide reassessment and optimisation of all printing activity, DER introduced a unified fleet of powerful Brother mono laser printers.

Brother has partnered with DocuFORM, which is used by DER for fleet management, as a monitoring tool as well as providing a connection to Brother's Managed Print Services (MPS) in Germany. The solution was delivered in close collaboration between the DER IT team, System House Bechtle, IT service partner MigraSys and Brother.



Looking after the customer, not the printer

While the main objective of the project was the optimisation and streamlining of printing across the agency network, the performance of the individual printer was of great importance too.

In a travel agency setting, documents have to be delivered fast, as they are often created during the customer conversation. The calm and pleasant atmosphere needed in this consultative environment also requires a fairly quiet, low-emission printing device. Furthermore, printed forms require precision to ensure every field is where it needs to be and the printer has to be able to handle various paper formats and weights. Finally, the device needs to be undemanding in terms of paper and toner refills and maintenance.

The team's choice was the Brother HL-L6400DW. It matches the described specification perfectly, with fast first-page-out times of less than 7.5 seconds, print speeds of up to 50 pages per minute, large paper capacity and eco mode for quiet, low-emission printing.

But it's the ability to be compatible with a range of software solutions that really boosts the user experience on the ground. Thanks to smart analytics, new toners are sent automatically and pre-emptively, meaning local staff don't have to worry about looking after the printer. They no longer have to hold spare toner in stock or manually order new consumables from the IT team, nor do they ever run the risk of being without a ready-to-use printer.

Brother's latest mono laser line-up includes four printers and five all-in-ones - a series designed for print volumes of up to 10,000 pages per month.



An IT team freed up to deliver value

With the user base thus supported, the DER IT team can focus on adding value, by strategically managing and optimising the whole print device estate.

Brother and DocuFORM provides the team with comprehensive, actionable management information as well as insight into local print behaviour. The new transparency and visibility allows DER to predict cost and better understand needs.

User support is also simplified: device alerts or service notifications are sent directly to the IT team, who can solve issues faster, without relying on local users to raise a ticket or explain the problem. All that local employees are still required to do is change the toner – thanks to the HL-L6400DW's user-friendly design this is very easy to do.

The other advantage of the new solution from the IT team's perspective was that the print driver for the new fleet could be tailored in advance to work seamlessly with widely used travel agency software Amadeus. This meant a much faster, more straightforward roll-out of the new fleet and its overarching system.

Change that's produced only winners

Business, IT team, users and customers have all benefitted from DER's clever reorganisation and centralisation of its printing processes. The rethink has removed unnecessary hassle and laborious admin and has improved the service local staff can give to their customers.

Sascha Karbginski concludes:

"This new approach to printing enables us not only to best support our employees in their daily work, but also to shape all print activity across the organisation into something altogether more cost-effective and transparent."