Mobile solution enables
easier delivery of fresh products

CITIZEN
Micro HumanTech
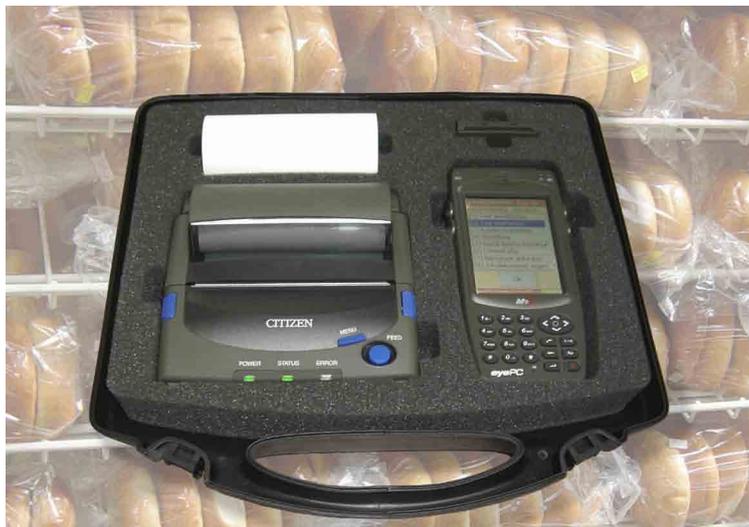
Based in Sulz-Sigmarswangen, Germany, GRiBs GmbH is a software and systems vendor that specialises in the baking and bakery markets. The company was founded in 1980 and provides medium size to large bakeries with ERP solutions and administrative software. With a customer base of 300 in Germany, GRibs GmbH holds a market share of over 30 percent.

Owner and Managing Director **Günter Reißfelder** reports that one of the company's customers had been using a mobile solution for route drivers that was completely outdated.

The search for a standardized solution

What was needed was a combined solution consisting of PDAs and printers that would allow for the route drivers to print out orders, lists of the products delivered and returns while they were at the customer's site. In addition, it was important to be able to transfer the recorded data to the customer's ERP system back at the main office. Furthermore, ensuring that the PDAs and the printers would function reliably and be easy to operate without any additional training was of immense importance to this customer.

"The labour turnover among route drivers is quite high. For this reason, it was important to make sure that people get along well with the system from the very start. Secondly, ensuring that the new solution was based on industry standards was also important, due to the fact that it was rather difficult to find replacement parts for the previously used specialised solution. Furthermore, migrating to new technologies was completely impossible", **Reißfelder** explains. It was also important to make sure that the printer would be able to print at a width of 9.5 cm, due to the fact that this customer supplies products to chains of stores that require that certain information be included in their shipping orders.

Already during the initial test phase, the **PD24** mobile printer from Citizen proved to be most suited for this application. "We really invested a lot of effort into these tests, because this marked the first time that we had ever gotten into hardware to such a great extent", says **Reißfelder**. "Here, for instance, we took a very close look at the interface, because we were interested in using a **Bluetooth printer** that would allow us to avoid the wear and tear associated with cables from the very beginning. Furthermore, the customer had rather specific requirements with regard to the appearance of shipping orders, such as bold print, certain fonts and good readability at night, due to the fact that deliveries took place early in the morning", **Reißfelder** explains. At the same time, the **PD24** also performed well during long term stress tests, so the decision was made in favour of this model printer.
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"Our customer approached us and asked us to come up with a new, more modern solution. Here, the fact that we were able to offer him consulting support, a selection of hardware, develop the software, integrate it into an ERP package, manage the rollout and provide long term support on our own was of great advantage,"

Günter Reißfelder notes.

Prototype displayed convincing performance

The overall project began on **1 September, 2006**, and testing of the printer and selection and development of the software application, including the ERP and PDA programming continued on through January of 2007. Two prototypes of the **PD24** printer, together with the software application developed by **GRiBs** and the appropriate PDA, were subjected to two months of on-road testing by the customer.

"By the third day, the printers and the application were already being put to normal use. The two test printers from Citizen passed these tests with flying colours, even under rough conditions. Because the tests were conducted in January, this meant that testing could be performed under winter conditions. In fact, the printer from Citizen successfully met all of the demands and we are certain it will continue to prove itself even during long term use. As a result, the decision to go with this combination was hardly a question for us", **Reißfelder** says.

Today, this customer relies on a total of **60 PD24** printers. Before departing for their tours in the morning, the route drivers use them to produce their cargo documents and later the final shipping orders, as well as return vouchers and order details at customer sites. In addition, they are also able to access stored information and print this out for customers upon request, an aspect that simplifies communication with customers and results in time savings.

"The fact that drivers are able to change the quantities to reflect any deviations in the volumes produced that evening is also of great importance. This happens rather frequently with fresh products. In such cases, the driver simply prints out the modified shipping orders for his customers. He also records any products returned, provides the customer with a proper return slip and takes the order for the next day. Back at the main office, this data is loaded directly from the PDA to the centralized ERP system. This, in turn, helps avoid having to make any manual corrections after the fact", **Reißfelder** explains.

Ideal delivery solution

According to **Reißfelder,** some of the key advantages that this solution, also known as **gribsDRIVERPAD**, offers are that the final documents can be printed directly on the customer's premises, there is no need for data to be processed back at the main office later and the flow of documents can be simplified effectively.

"This makes it possible for customers to audit their accounts much more easily and essentially rule out any discrepancies. Furthermore, with this project, it was possible to achieve excellent integration of the delivery area into the ERP application. For us, it was extremely important to have a reliable manufacturer capable of providing long term support, as well as replacement parts, as our partner. This close cooperation began even during the development phase, when Citizen was able to answer all of our questions in a quick and non-bureaucratic manner", **Reißfelder** notes.

"Other customers have also expressed their interest in this solution and we are confident that this represents an excellent solution for basically every company that delivers products to retailers", he concludes.

Featuring printers:

CITIZEN PD24
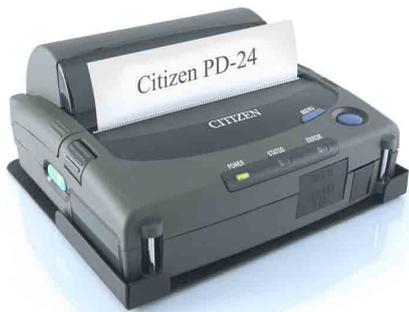
Provides you an ideal mobility:
- easy to handle and maintain,
- multiple connections choice,
- light weight,
- long-life battery.

About Citizen Systems Europe

Citizen Systems Europe operates from London, UK and Esslingen, Germany covering Europe, Middle East and Africa. Citizen offers a broad range of thermal label & barcode printers, portable and dot matrix printers, mini and POS printers. Via a network of specialized partners, these are sold into markets as diverse as industrial, retail, healthcare and mobile applications.

Citizen Systems Europe is a wholly owned subsidiary of Citizen Systems Japan and part of the Citizen Watch Company of Japan. The globally operating group produces its world-famous eco drive watches and mini printers, industrial print systems and machine tools, crystal oscillators, LEDs and other electronic components.

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