

CASE STUDY



REAL Digital International

UK Mailmark verification minimises Royal Mail surcharges

REAL Digital International has firmly established itself as the UK's leading provider of dynamic print communications and consultancy. Established in 2004 and since opening their Croydon factory in 2006, the company is now turning over in excess of £18m and has won numerous awards including PrintWeek's Company of the Year in 2012.

Specialising in offering high volume variable content print, the company handles a broad range of projects involving transactional, direct mail and plastic card applications, which are all reliant on a fool-proof integrity process provided by Lake Image Systems.



CUSTOMER PROFILE

- Established in 2004, REAL Digital International is one of UK's leading provider of transaction, direct mail and card personalisation print, mail and fulfilment services
- Clients include leading Financial Services, Health Authorities & Telecom providers
- Based in Croydon, UK, their 6,500 sqm. factory outputs c.8-10M items per month.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

- New Royal Mail Mailmark™ barcode offers many benefits but non-conformance can result in substantial surcharges
- Volume discrepancies, manifest inaccuracies, mis-sorts or Mailmark™ readability errors must be avoided to minimise RM penalties
- Required a vision based system to inspect and validate the Mailmark™ printed on all envelopes and to pass accurate piece level data to RDI's ADF system.

SOLUTION SUMMARY

- Multiscan Integrity system on the inserter scans an ID barcode on each sheet, identifies it and tracks it through to enveloping
- Piece ID read is passed to Inkjet system to enable it to print the correct Mailmark™ on the envelope
- A camera, with appropriate lighting, Reads, Inspects and Grades each Mailmark™ barcode, validates it and ensures it matches the piece ID read through the envelope window. A full image of the envelope is also captured. If Multiscan detects any integrity or Mailmark™ read errors, then the envelope is diverted and the piece is reprinted
- Multiscan generates a set of audit files that are passed to ADF system which generates and uploads a precise eManifest to RM.

MAILMARK™ IMPLEMENTATION

Their 6,500 sqm. document factory now includes an impressive and diverse range of hardware including two new Screen Truepress Jet520 inkjet printers, five iGen4 as well as various other Xerox machines, numerous W+D inserters, various collators and almost 100 Lake Image cameras. Capacity is huge and the factory is regularly turning out between 8 and 10 million fully personalised A4 items each month – the majority of which are scrutinised at one stage or another by Lake Image Systems' Discovery MultiScan system.

To maintain its market position as an innovator, REAL Digital were one of the first mailers in the UK to embrace the new Royal Mail Mailmark™ barcode standard. The Mailmark™ technology employs the use of a 2D matrix code that encrypts postal data. Through an online analytics dashboard, detailed consignment level reports are available on predicted delivery, volume and performance. This enabled REAL Digital to offer the latest postal sortation solution available in the UK with the added benefit of enriched management information reports for their clients. The predicted delivery information helps clients to better coordinate their multi-media marketing campaigns as well as to improve their contact centre resource scheduling.

CHALLENGES

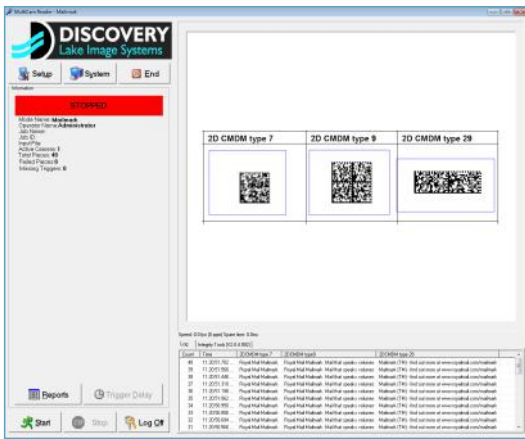
Delivering an efficient, cost effective Mailmark™ service however brought in a number of challenges that they had to overcome. "Whilst the benefits of moving to Mailmark™ are considerable, the standard of the Mailmark™ and associated consignment documentation that we need to supply the Royal Mail needs to be 100% accurate", commented David Laybourne, Managing Director of REAL Digital. "Volume discrepancies, manifest inaccuracies, mis-sorts or machinability related errors surfacing at RM's Mail Centres can result in significant non-compliance surcharges which we must avoid".

If the Mailmark™ printed on a mail piece is incorrect or deemed unreadable by the RM sorting machinery, then the surcharges imposed can be as high as 16.5p per piece, which can seriously impact overall job profitability.

"We need to evidence what we produce and handover to RM" added Laybourne. "It is crucial that we ensure that every Mailmark™ barcode is correct and conforms to the standards set by RM before each and every mail-piece leaves our factory. When issues arise, we need to be armed with a set of detailed reports to either confirm or dispute RM's claims. It is not inconceivable that RM systems could be at fault and so we need to evidence that fact that our consignments are 100% correct when Mailmark™ surcharges are being imposed on us."



CASE STUDY



SOLUTION

Lake Image Systems has been a long standing supplier of integrity and inspections systems to REAL Digital, so when this requirement arose, Lake Image were the natural choice.

The existing Discovery Multiscan scans and tracks each item and ensures that the in-line inkjet printer receives the correct envelope data. Lake Image engineers worked with REAL Digital to add specific functionality to Multiscan to inspect, grade and validate each Mailmark™ barcode and match it against a master file. For any Mailmark™ barcodes that fail a set specification, Multiscan would instruct the inserter to divert the piece for further inspection, or flag it for an automated reprint. This allows the operator to quickly locate the problem, report it, repair it, and get the machine running again. Productivity and reporting ability is greatly improved.

Furthermore, Multiscan captures an image of each envelope at the end of the inserter line before it is handed over to RM or a downstream access provider.

At the end of every job, Multiscan provides a detailed audit file to REAL Digital's ADF system which adjusts and records actual volumes and other consignment details to ensure that the eManifest submitted to RM is 100% accurate.

IMPACT

By incorporating a Mailmark™ inspection and validation capability into the existing integrity workflow, REAL Digital has increased the value of the print and mail services they offer and helped them to attract more business.

"Flawless execution is the name of the game," says David Laybourne the Managing Director of REAL Digital, "Implementing Mailmark™ required high print quality, accuracy and speed for every one of the 100s of jobs we run monthly and Lake Image is a critical part of delivering that capability. Lake Image once again has provided us with the critical elements for us to deliver a dependable service to our customers and at the same time protects the business from unforeseen liabilities that could hit our bottom line."

REAL Digital believes that to maintain its market position as an innovator, the key factor behind their business success has been the trust it has established with its customers and the confidence it has in its suppliers. David Laybourne sums up: "Our reputation as a service provider who continuously adds value is very precious to us, but above that we need to ensure that our customers' trust in us is always justified. We in turn rely on our technology partners, like Lake Image, to deliver faultlessly too."

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- REAL Digital minimises the risk of surcharges by validating each Mailmark™ printed on every piece and ensuring their eManifest data is 100% correct before handing the consignment to RM
- Comprehensive piece level data collected enables REAL Digital to evidence the integrity of their consignments if issues arise with RM
- REAL Digital has enhanced the value it offers to its customers through optimised postal sortation solutions, richer MI data and better predictive delivery information. This enables them to attract more profitable business
- As an early adopter of the Mailmark™ technology, REAL Digital has elevated their market position as an innovator.

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David Laybourne
Managing Director, REAL Digital International

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