

Mail for taxpayers

After a tendering process, the Technische Finanzamt (tax office) in Cottbus has purchased a new inserting machine.



The TFA Cottbus is located in a new building in between former barracks.

The government agency center in Cottbus is located on the site of a former barracks which goes back to when Germany had an emperor. Naturally, it was modernized before being re-purposed. The Technische Finanzamt (TFA) resides in a central location in the only new building. It is the data processing center for the fiscal authorities of the state of Brandenburg. Tax data are a highly sensitive matter with high data protection requirements. This is why security and monitoring are the TFA's top priority. Access to the production rooms is restricted to authorized persons, and even they must pass through a turnstile.

Data, printing and inserting

The TFA processes all finance office data for the state of Brandenburg, so its "customers" are taxpayers. Printing and inserting is also performed here for the Technische Finanzamt Berlin and for various other Brandenburg agencies as well as Charite, Europe's largest hospital. This also makes the TFA one of East Germany's largest output centers. In addition to tax, salary and compensation notices, the additional

customers also require other types of documents such as the mandatory invitations to the early diagnosis examinations for children. Cheques and remittance slips are also mailed and require the use of special paper. The number of pages produced for outgoing mail amounts to about 60 million per year, most of which are processed into DL size letters; documents for the finance agencies and the central payroll office are cut to A4 size on two job separation systems - one of which is a Müller Apparatebau system. Double-sided printing is performed using the 2-up method on Pagestream 235 Océ printers. These machines have already been operating reliably at the TFA since 1998. Section manager Frank Scholz places a lot of value on using the machines as long as possible. But eventually one of the older inserting machines had to be replaced.

Requirements: Above average

A demanding list of requirements was prepared. The new machine had to be designed for 15 million inserts per year and up to 12 000 per hour, the continuous stacks - printed using the slalom process - needed to be fed to the

merger from Z to A, and the dynamic processing of barcode or OMR control signals with comparison reading of the front and back needed to be ensured throughout the entire line. Up to nine pages cut to A4 size had to be packaged into one envelope and supplemented selectively or permanently with one or two inserts. Since faulty mailings are inspected directly at the inserting machine, they should be left open and sorted out.



The TFA production team knows how to handle the new inserting machine (from left): Wolfgang Kischke (operator), Frank Scholz (section manager), Rex Schiller (operator)

A vertical stacker was requested for the "good" mailings. This is a special challenge at the high speeds since the thickness varies from one letter to the next, as they contain between one and nine sheets.

Challenging order for Müller Apparatebau

The fact that this order was awarded to Müller Apparatebau was in part due to meeting all requirements economically. The Müller machine is also suitable not just for large runs, but also for small runs since it can be changed over so quickly between jobs. Then there was also the space issue. In comparison to the old machine, the new one had to perform more tasks at a higher speed, but couldn't be much larger because additional space for the new purchase wasn't available. The Müller modules out of which the system is assembled allow for a very flexible setup so that the available space could be used optimally. Scholz: "The area which the machines could take up was given, and the Müller machine fit very well.," The Müller machine also offered a few more special features: A touchless wet spray process is used for closing the envelopes. This allows

for precise adjustment of fluid application to the coating, so that the choice of envelope doesn't play a role. An integrated color marking system can apply a targeted red line to the back of the envelope as needed - this allows the operator to tell when he has to separate a finished job. This is important for Infopost since it is sorted by routing region, for example, or for mailings for different offices. The mobile vacuum system with a paper waste

container capacity over one cubic meter offers another advantage. It has lots of room for paper cuttings such as those generated on the perforated guide edge - dust formation is reduced considerably and "accidental" ingress into the machine of shavings which would cause jams is prevented.



The new Müller machine adjusts well to the available space.

Dedicated from the beginning

Three months passed between the tender being issued and the order. Building the machine in Kranzberg near Munich and setting it up in Cottbus took a few more weeks, and it went into operation at the TFA in December 2012.

had to learn how to resolve faults. They were already working autonomously after two weeks. Service deployments are hardly necessary because the operators themselves know how to handle the machine.

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Well prepared for extra work

The TFA operates with one shift. Overtime could occur in case of a disaster, and a second shift is definitely run for complex special orders - as is currently the case in the course of the Sepa implementation. Scholz: "This requires mailing every taxpayer who has given the tax office a direct debit authorization. That comes to approx. 3.2 million additional letters which are mailed out within six weeks."

Initial production support went smoothly. Jens Dumpff, Regional Sales Manager at Müller Apparatebau, remembers why: "The operators learned with great interest. They had to understand the logic of the machine first, which was very different compared to the old machine. And they

That also makes for a volume highlight for the postal services operator: The local RPV (Regio Print office) works for the TFA - this is also the result of a tendering process. ak

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