

# The paper jungle — a thing of the past

Modern software solutions that offer efficient routing and tracking of express deliveries or goods shipments are helping the daily work of goods-in and post room staff in clinics and Hospitals.

**H**ospitals, companies, government and educational

establishments are today confronted with an ever increasing volume of express deliveries and goods shipments. With this increase in volume comes additional demands to manage the onward delivery of these items within strict service levels, which further adds to the workload and pressures on these departments.

## A PLUS FOR TRANSPARENCY

For greater transparency and security when handling parcels and goods shipments we recommend using special software for internal distribution and for tracking valuables, such as the newly developed software solution, SendSuite®- Tracking by Pitney Bowes — a further enhancement of the successful "Arrival XE" software, used worldwide by approximately 7000 customers.

Using software for goods distribution and tracking makes it possible to keep track of

anything that can be provided with a barcode: shipments, envelopes, products, medicines, samples, inventory or other important documents. The software creates a closed tracking loop for the entire delivery cycle within the company by creating a unique barcode for

each created item. This in turn facilitates tracking the shipment at each stage.

This means that the processing of all incoming elements is rationalised and the overall service is accelerated. Electronic control of goods received removes the need for paper

input records and often difficult to read handwritten documents, and a higher degree of automation and control is achieved. >

## INTERVIEW

Michael Karl, system administrator of the Warehousing & Logistics and "Arrival" unit at the Klinikum der Universität München (University of Munich Hospital), in an interview with FACTS describes the hospital's experiences with the "Arrival XE" delivery management software.

**FACTS: When did you start using the Arrival XE software and what was the reason for acquiring it? Were you already using similar software?**

**Michael Karl:** Before 2010, delivery management was carried out exclusively based on a list system — nothing was recorded electronically. This had the drawback that papers were lost or handwriting was hard to read. As this system was out of date, the management decided to acquire an appropriate piece of software and to explore the market beforehand in close consultation with experts from the warehousing and logistics and IT sectors.

**FACTS: Why did the hospital management finally decide on the Pitney Bowes "Arrival XE" system?**

**Karl:** Of all the suppliers on the market researched, Pitney Bowes was the only one able to develop an interface to the hospital's internal SAP ERP software.

**FACTS: How did the software implementation go and how do you evaluate aspects such as user-friendly operation?**

**Karl:** Compared to similar projects, the implementation was generally very straightforward and everyone involved met the schedule. This is mainly due to good teamwork onsite between the hospital project team and the Pitney Bowes software experts.

**FACTS: How do you rate aspects such as system stability: Have there been any failures? How quickly were they resolved? How easy is it to get in touch with customer service?**

**Karl:** During the initial testing phase, which lasted twelve months, the software had to be integrated into the IT infrastructure and users had to become familiar with the system. Based on our experiences, the software has been adapted more closely to individual requirements in some areas. Following completion of this test phase, the software has proved to be completely user-friendly and has gained user acceptance. This is also confirmed by the internal surveys we have conducted on this topic. The software is generally very reliable, we have recorded hardly any failures. And when there have been minor issues, Pitney Bowes support responded quickly and was able to help.

**FACTS: What volume and what kind of shipments will be processed using the Arrival XE software?**

**Karl:** The internal hospital collection and delivery service moves around 1200-1300 different packages and shipments per week. This includes traditional letter post, specialist literature, stock material or medical supplies such as implants or heart valves for the different medical disciplines — overall, primarily shipments that are extremely important and some that are time-critical and valuable.

**FACTS: How quickly will the investment pay for itself?**

**Karl:** Following the test phase and a further operating life of about 1.5 years, the investment will have paid for itself in full.

**FACTS: How would you rate the overall price-performance level of the software? Would you recommend the software to others?**



MICHAEL KARL: System Administrator of the Warehousing & Logistics and "Arrival" unit at the Klinikum der Universität München

**Karl:** After around three years of use we can evaluate the price-performance ratio as fair. In any case I would recommend the software with a clear conscience to users who are seeking an efficient and transparent means of tracking and routing express deliveries and goods shipments or other documents.

**FACTS: What enhancements are you planning with the Pitney Bowes tracking system?**

**Karl:** The software is currently in use on the Grosshadern campus, where a total of 45 employees, including 11 warehouse workers work with it on a total of 16 handheld devices. According to division head, Michael Hermann, by the end of the year the software should also be in use on the city centre campus in a total of seven additional hospitals and institutes. Apart from this, there are the fields of transfusion medicine and pharmacy, which covers the complete supply of medicines. To this end, a further 25 employees have to be connected with about 20 handheld devices. In order to optimise the overall implementation, software engineers at Pitney Bowes are currently working to develop a customized smartphone app for our hospital.

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## ALL DATA UP-TO-DATE

The use of portable data entry devices makes it possible to control the movement of each shipment. Delivery of the shipment is confirmed by an electronic signature, including details of the location, date and time of delivery. After delivery, the final data relating to shipment status is regularly updated through synchronisation with the main system.

Using this data base, the system sets up the internal daily deliveries by department, post room or delivery route — depending on the applicable delivery route rules. Employees receive shipment notes in electronic or paper form, so that the overall delivery process is accelerated. The recipients of a shipment receive email notification that it is on its way. The current whereabouts of a shipment can always be located and special delivery instructions can be sent to the post room. A camera feature allows the SendSuite®-Tracking system to take up to four photos per incoming shipment. This means visible damage can be reliably documented as soon as the shipment is received.

## INFORMATION

## Klinikum der Universität München

The Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU) hospital is a centre providing top quality medical treatment, innovation and medical and technical progress, along with personalised care and a sense of security and confidence. With more than 2000 beds, this is a hospital offering the highest level of medical care — with 45 clinics, institutes and departments in all medical fields. Since 1 October 1999, the Klinikum der Universität München has formed an organizational, financial, economical and administratively independent part of LMU with the Großhadern and city centre campuses. This merger has allowed the Klinikum der Universität München to develop into one of Europe's largest hospitals. The change in legal form on 1 June 2006 made the hospital a public institution. Due to its great potential in research, teaching and patient care, the hospital occupies a leading position among the German university hospitals. Currently around 10,000 employees in the fields of medicine, nursing, administration, technology and supply services address the needs and recovery of the hospital's patients.



Photo: wikipedia, Andreas Praefcke

## ALWAYS UP-TO-DATE

With the Pitney Bowes tracking system, users are always up to date on the status of a shipment: who had it previously, who has it now, where it is and when it was delivered. This means time-consuming searches for lost,

delayed or undelivered mail and parcels are a thing of the past. The complete workflow for incoming mail and distribution is fully transparent and documented. Another advantage is that responsibility for control and delivery is taken away from post room staff. Daniel Müller



GREATER TRANSPARENCY: Detailed reports on the "life cycle" of shipments improve efficiency in post rooms or goods reception areas.

