

There is only one Ergo - Post Logistics

The big insurance group with many sites has uniformly integrated the in- and outgoing mail

The Ergo is the group of several individual historically grown insurance companies - the address of the main site in Dusseldorf " Victoriaplatz 2 " is the inference one of its origins. The ways of working have also grown also historically different in various locations. Some restructuring has taken place here, even for post processing.

1.5 years ago, the Department of Post Logistics has systematically and thoroughly optimized their processes using the Six Sigma Method. The ways, which need to be covered in the big department, run since then no more back and forth, the handwork has been greatly simplified , each process status is always perceived with the colored signaling according to the Poka-Yoke Approach, and errors are avoided at the outset. The entire system has been implemented on the Ergo locations of Dusseldorf , Cologne , Hamburg and Munich using the same logic so that all processes can run consistently. "If there is a central message, for example, 'Box 22 today has priority'; everybody is updated." says Arno Juraschek, who is responsible for process issues of the ingoing-management of the entire group.

Since the work processes are alive and are constantly changing, some workshops are being conducted at regular intervals, in which the responsible people of all the sites exchange positions in order to maintain the parallelism and the optimal.

The changes resulted from the restructuring are so effective that the Ergo Post Logistics has faced up the "Poststelle des Jahres 2013" competition and won. We visited the winners representing the largest site in Dusseldorf and met not only Arno Juraschek, but also Belz Eva and Marcus Jenichen, who are here responsible for the input and output management, respectively.

Output: Collaboration of Itergo and Ergo

Ergo, together with the Itergo, has an in-house IT service provider who prints, envelopes and performs various other IT services such as application development, data management and hardware integration. The dispatch of the yearly 45 to 50 million letters lies in the hands of the Ergo itself. Since 2009, the consolidation and sorting have been done in-house. The delivery takes place partially for the German Post, but the major part goes TNT Post. Later this year, the hundred millionth letter is to be sent over the private mail service. There were just slightly more than 200 complaints, the dissatisfaction rate is so low per thousand. Such transparent data are known at all because the TNT shipments are tracked and thus the whole bunch of the status of a registered letter are known.

The sorting to the service providers are done by the Itergo via Posy and provides the deliveries for the German Post with computer-based franking. The TNT deliveries remain here unfranked. Then, Itergo transfers the enveloped letters to the mail room with vehicles.

Next October, an extra work will arrive to Ergo – Itergo team once more because the corporation announces its customers the withdrawals as part of the Sepa Conversion . That means seven million letters will be "on top" within ten days. Then, the team will work 24 hours a day, even on the weekends. For the next three million, which will arrive in December , the team will have had a lot of practice, then.

NPI sorting machines perform the further sorting and separation in the mail room, which were set up on hardware and software level by the Swiss system house Prolistic to the specific requirements

of the Ergo, an Atlas machine for C4 letters and two Maxim 8000 for DIN. What Itergo has produced in 120 individually porto-optimized outgoing jobs is integrated here into a single consolidated outgoing post quantity at which the maximum discounts are obtained.

The letters, which are, although, provided for TNT, but due to budgetary cover but can not be delivered by the orange mail carriers, are filtered out in the intelligent sorting. These shipments are finally freed with a high performance franking machine.

Scan Preparation, Step 1

The sorting machines, which complete the consolidation in the afternoons, serves yet for another purpose : "For us, the machines must do more than just sorting." says Jenichen. "They also presort the incoming mail. For that, they look for features on the envelope, such as the section the letter is addressed to. In the first run, they already recognize 70 percent, including hand writings. The unrecognized ones come in to the video coding section, and are then in a second run automatically resorted. Only 0.1 percent is left over." Barcodes are printed for the assignment, so that the machine detects where it has space on the envelope for this purpose.

That's not all: The recognized letters are opened "logically" with a milling machine; "logically" means that if the letter goes to the addressee who gets mail unopened, it stays closed . Within 45 minutes, five-digit incoming mail is presorted and assigned without reading up the department information so that it can be treated systematically and by priority. The information from the input remain recorded for 90 days for the cases where there is doubt as to whether a letter has ever arrived or not. Jenichen: "We can prove it if necessary!"

Scan Preparation , Step 2

Before scanning, the letters which are bundled according to the departments are prepared further. The departments have claims, whether scanning should be in color and whether the original should be delivered. In addition, there are guaranteed priorities for subsequent processing. Now the letters are tempered, unclamped and fine-sorted. "For this sorting, expertise is needed," says Juraschek. "All proceeding processes depend on it."

"We have developed the working spaces jointly with the employees." says Belz. And it is immediately noticeable that the colleagues are not undemanding : The tables along with the support for the mail boxes and the sorting shelves are height-adjustable by pushing a button so that coworkers can work while standing and sitting. Screen and phone are available for inquiries.

At regular intervals, a bell rings . This is the sign that the messenger makes his rounds with the electric car to collect prepared stack for the scan. The filled bins are then moved in front of the shelf so that they can be emptied from the back. The trolley has colored bins, so that the letters in the sorted stack can retain their order.

Comfortable Scan

Scanning takes place at Ergo since 2006. Today, there are six major production scanners from Kodak placed in three rooms : Four i1860s and two i1840s, plus a high-performance scanning-belt from IBML, which is also mentored by Kodak. Like the sorting tables, the production scanners are also height-adjustable so that every employee, whether tall or short, can comfortably work on it while sitting or standing. This is really important because the daily throughput of the scanners is around 50000 pages. The same-day processing is a promise that is strictly adhered to.

In addition, there is a backup space for failure-safety: If the operation is jammed at any other location, its production could be transferred spontaneously here. The single system makes it possible.

Internal Programs : to Agents, Offices and even in the House

The deliveries to 8000 agents are collected in to 6 Kardex-Paternoster-Sorting shelves, in which the bins can individually be controlled. This eliminates running paths and keeps the space requirement low. The mail to the regional offices are sent by parcel. The professional packaging line is worthwhile for 100 to 200 deliveries in a day . The internal mail system for not to be scanned mail is conveniently located for pick-up on the way to the shop and casino. There is also an intelligently structured readmission location for various documents such as domestic mail, faxes that goes in the departments or manually enveloped outgoing mail.

By the way, the mail office also provides its own DHL Packstation, which is provided for all the staff for private purposes.

Worth for Money, since Uniquely Structured

In the eulogy for the award, it was said : "The jury awards the prize of the mail office the year to the team not because of the sheer size of the incoming and outgoing mail volumes. The structures are more prize-worthy, which have been developed to improve the efficiency of the large scale incoming and outgoing mails and to increase output and simultaneously to cope with the new quality assured tasks, for example the entire preparation process to the digital workflow, but also the processing of the outgoing multi-channel mail delivery including porto-optimization."

Unique sorting machines, unique work-desks, also unique tight mesh inside of Itergo. But, especially the transparent parallel structure at all sites is unique, which is coordinated by Arno Juraschek and through constant coordination for neat processes. "It works so well because all employees pull together." said Eva Belz. " The processes are changing constantly, and we live it."