

New cash registers from the cloud

Logistics company makes its cash registers more flexible through modernization

“A digital, cloud-based solution and IoT combined with mobile network connections create a perfect solution for branch cash registers.”

Christian Alexander Schneider, Telekom Deutschland GmbH

People in Europe send billions of letters and parcels every year. The logistics companies in the various countries operate a total of around 600,000 branches, where people can order and purchase products and services. These branches also have to be operated in underdeveloped areas to give people with limited mobility access to logistics services. Cash register systems play a crucial role in process flows within the branches. A shop's register is not simply a cash register for collecting payments and holding money. All of the necessary product prices are saved in the cash register system. The systems also serve as the access point for internal logistics processes. For example, the systems model customs regulations, launch parcel tracking, and record deliveries of registered letters – all in the background. As part of a cloud-first strategy, a T-Systems customer – a company from the logistics sector – wanted to implement a modern solution from the cloud for its cash register systems, one that offered more flexibility and dynamism and that significantly reduced expenses for ongoing management.

At a glance

- Introduction of modern, cloud-based cash registers
- Reduction of IT maintenance and operating costs
- Fast rollout to 600 locations
- Network connection through M2M Global SIM cards
- Fully integrated into the customer's process and system landscape
- Rapid return on investment

Reference in detail

The challenge

Previously, fat clients were used in all of the logistics service provider's branches. These are sophisticated cash register systems whose "intelligence" is generated by a local computer in the branch. These cash register systems are very powerful, but incur high internal costs for IT management. After all, in addition to regular maintenance and troubleshooting, the cash register systems also require occasional updates, for example, when legal regulations change (such as VAT reduction), the service provider adjusts the prices of its products, or new products are offered in the shops. Another cost driver when managing the connected cash registers is the provision of wired network access points, particularly in remote locations. It is a very static solution overall that generates high expenditures both when opening and closing branches. As part of its cloud-first strategy, the logistics customer wanted to implement a novel, modern solution from the cloud for its cash register systems, one that offered more flexibility and dynamism and that significantly reduced the expense of ongoing management.

The solution

Together with Telekom Deutschland GmbH, T-Systems designed a suitable cash register solution for the customer. It is based on the innovative standard PoS systems by enfore. With this solution, the logic for the cash register systems at the PoS (point of sale) is delivered as software-as-a-service from the cloud. The software client is installed locally from here,

which ensures that the cash registers will continue to work in case of a temporary network outage. The cash registers are connected IoT devices and communicate with the cloud back-end over the internet, encrypted at the application level. It even uses mobile networks to do so instead of hard-wired lines. To enable this, they contain M2M Global SIM cards for M2M IoT with National Roaming. This makes it possible to access different mobile networks of German providers, ensuring that every cash register in the branch has reliable access to the cloud. The enfore solution was developed primarily for the SME segment, however. Its main customers, restaurants and retailers, have modest numbers of cash register systems. The rollout of 600 cash registers in the fall of 2020 required an enterprise-compliant rollout concept in which all the relevant stakeholders were involved. In addition, the cash register system also had to be integrated with the customer's existing management processes and tools. Last but not least, the cash register systems had to be integrated with background services like customs regulations and parcel tracking. The customer's IT team took care of this task. Deutsche Telekom ensured that the solution was scalable for the 600 branches. T-Systems is responsible for the overall concept and service management for the customer. This includes reporting. Second level support is provided by the Deutsche Telekom business unit ISP (Individual Solutions & Products). It accesses the enfore solution for third level support. As a result, the company now has a specific, managed cash register solution based on a standard product.

Customer benefits

With the introduction of the new cash register systems, the logistics service provider has become much more flexible. Since the cash register logic is supplied from the cloud back-end, updates can be rolled out to all connected cash registers quickly and easily. At the same time, the IoT solution also enables remote diagnostics and inventories of the cash register. Updates, maintenance, and troubleshooting can be carried out remotely by trained in-house personnel. IT management expenses have been cut significantly—embedding the new system in the existing service processes also played a role here. The customer can benefit from the possibilities offered by the cloud and IoT without having to redesign its internal process landscape. The stakeholders expect that the new solution will generate a fast return on investment. The significantly lower procurement costs for the cash register systems and reduced IT management expenditures are key factors here. Yet the cash registers aren't only easy to maintain and manage; the new systems also give the logistics service provider much greater flexibility. When new branches are opened, the cash register functions can be implemented quickly. When existing locations are closed, the cash registers can be transferred to other sites—without having to make any changes to the network infrastructure. The mobile connection, using M2M Global SIM cards, means the registers can be used in any location. As a result, the customer can respond to dynamic business developments with an enterprise-compliant cash register solution. The logistics company will initially pilot the cash register solution at 600 sites with little infrastructure. The next step would see this solution rolled out to additional locations. In addition, the innovative approach of the cash register solution and the technologies and services it employs open up new opportunities for offering digital services to the company's customers.

Further advantages:

- Innovation coupled with implementation expertise in the enterprise domain
- Scalable at all times
- Fast time-to-market
- Embedded in existing processes
- Technical integration with background services
- Simple, intuitive operation of the cash registers

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