

CASE STUDY – ESPERA NEDERLAND

Since the early 60's, Espera Nederland supplies weighing, pricing and labelling machines for the Dutch market. "Our machines are mainly aimed at the suppliers of supermarket chains," explains Rob Lemmens, technical department manager. Of all sold machines, a test setup is being built at the headquarters in Heeze, after which the system is custom-made and ultimately set up at the customer's premises by an Espera service technician, who also gives the user a service training. "However, our service does not stop," says Lemmens. "Of course, for almost all our customers, we also resolve any malfunctions and provide preventive maintenance to the machines."

SOLUTION NECESSARY

For years, the customized ERP package Portos has been leading for this service. "The system contains a service module in which customer profiles are created and malfunction descriptions are reported. In addition, customer and machine data is also sorted," explains Lemmens. Until recently, the service appointments were scheduled through a simple agenda function. Lemmens: "However, it was not always convenient and efficient. Our in-house service only contacted the service technician by telephone, who then wrote down his work and the materials used for it on a work order." The work orders were sent back to the headquarters in Heeze by post – and then often at least once a week. "Overview or a concrete method was not there. Let alone insight into our current inventory. So, there had to be a solution. Also, because it became increasingly difficult to schedule the appointments for the technicians," continues Lemmens.

LINK2 CENTRAL

After thorough analysis of the processes, Espera put together a wish and requirement list. One of the requirements was that the new system had an import and export function with Portos. The ERP package is and remains leading. In addition, the software must run on a Windows server and be multi-user. "We also want to log in at module level and not just at machine level. Many of our machines are built modular, allowing a module to be deployed in multiple machines," add Lemmens. Only **WAY2CONNECT** from Etten-Leur proved to meet all the needs. "This made the decision quick," said the manager. In **WAY2CONNECT's** solution, the field service management system **LINK2** is central. The planning application **LINK2OFFICE** offers a clear and flexible layout for planning, **LINK2SERVER** is responsible for import and export of digital work orders and provides continuous communication with our service technicians, currently equipped with PDAs. On the PDAs, the module **LINK2MOBILE** runs.

KEEP A GRIP

Thanks to the online connection with its service technicians, Espera keeps track of the current progress of the daily schedules. Ad hoc changes can be processed immediately and are insightful on the PDAs of the technicians. Activities can be manually assigned by drag and drop. Thanks to the automatic planning and GPS in the PDAs, activities can also be allocated based on, for example, availability, geographic data, and the necessary equipment and materials. The real-time feedback from the field also makes it clear whether the planning is feasible. If an activity threatens to expire, immediate action can be taken. "In addition, we can now accurately disclose what needs to be done and where a service technician has to watch for. Therefore, the chance of repeated malfunctions is greatly reduced and indirectly, we also reduce costs," says Lemmens.

MORE BENEFITS

And there are more benefits. All relevant information is available at all times. Once an item has been consumed, it is automatically passed and a refill order is generated. The chance of misguiding is almost nil. "We can now also invoice faster because we no longer have to wait for the work orders. This way of working is significantly faster, more efficient and cost-effective. And just as important; Our service level has increased even further. "The new method also offers advantages for the technician. He has continuously the right and correct information. And thanks to the GPS module in the PDA, he can always navigate to the right location without the need for an additional navigation system. "We might be able to work without it, but we absolutely do not want to", says Lemmens decidedly.

WAY2CONNECT