

BERLINER WASSERBETRIEBE

Berliner Wasserbetriebe Uses RFID to Identify 60,000 Assets

Berliner Wasserbetriebe is one of the largest water supply and sewerage companies in Germany. With a total of nine water works, the company supplies around 3.5 million residents in the capital city and the surrounding area with drinking water. Six wastewater treatment plants ensure the environmentally sound cleaning of waste water for around 3.9 million people. As one of the city's biggest investors, Berliner Wasserbetriebe also plays an important role in strengthening Berlin's economic power.

The Challenge

More than 60,000 movable assets – ranging from individual pumps to technologically complex plant sections – together form Berliner Wasserbetriebe's inventory-relevant assets. They are situated on approximately 300 sites in the Berlin-Brandenburg area.

Some 120 employees are currently responsible for the administration and inventory taking of the plants: up to 2007, employees used printed checklists to verify the completeness of components at a site and the data stored in the SAP system was manually updated.

Berliner Wasserbetriebe sought to replace its manual, error prone inventory taking process to an automated process that made plant management more transparent.

It was also vital to select a solution that was capable of operating faultlessly in the rough environments found in waste water treatment plants and that unlike traditional barcodes, could withstand exposure to impurities and waste water.

The Solution

Berliner Wasserbetriebe partnered with contractor Elektroniksystem-und Logistik-GmbH (ESG) to implement a solution that met the company's key requirements. Berliner Wasserbetriebe identified all 60,000 assets with RFID transponders (the small radio frequency chips with mini antennas store the identification numbers of the respective components) and deployed 85 WORKABOUT PRO handheld computers from Psion Teklogix.

WORKABOUT PRO, used to track the assets, features flexible ergonomics, a user-friendly interface, is IP65 rated for water and dust resistance, and can withstand drops from 1.2 meters to concrete. Employees scan barcode labels on the assets with the rugged mobile devices, and the information is also automatically sent to the SAP system. Assets from orders, planned constructions and sales of assets are now recorded directly into the system without delay.

The Benefits

The automatic recording of assets and their locations via RFID not only increases the productivity of the employees in plant management, but at the same time also ensures current data. Plants are always assigned to the correct department and cost centre and any possible errors during the manual transfer of data is no longer a concern since the WORKABOUT PRO eliminates the medium of paper from this business process.

The WORKABOUT PRO handhelds are based on ISO-compliant 13.56 megahertz technology, the international standard for RFID. This guarantees high investment security for the Berlin public utility company and at the same time leaves all options open for the optimization of other processes with radio identification in the future.



WORKABOUT PRO, used to track the assets, features flexible ergonomics, a user-friendly interface, is IP65 rated for water and dust resistance, and can withstand drops from 1.2 meters to concrete. Employees scan barcode labels on the assets with the rugged mobile devices, and the information is also automatically sent to the SAP system. Assets from orders, planned constructions and sales of assets are now recorded directly into the system without delay.

