

M-BAGS DONE RIGHT

Faster and more ergonomic manual processing of M-Bags for fewer errors and increased throughput

Following the success of the implementation of ID Mail Systems' MMW (Manual Mail Workstations), Brokers Worldwide had one manual processing operation left in its three operational facilities: M-Bag processing. Turning to ID Mail, BWW selected a new MMW/M-Bag system designed to achieve higher operator productivity with real-time data capture and improved quality.

"ID Mail's expertise with cross-border mail and the long history of success of the Dispatchers and MMW systems made selecting this new system easy," says Gene Donohoe, BWW's VP of operations.

M-Bags are the postal processing option for printed matter single-piece items weighing more than 2kg and for years required manual data capture and bag-tag creation that typically consumed several minutes per bag. As more services from different postal operators were introduced, the process of matching a country destination to the desired postal partner became even more complex and error-prone. BWW uses the USPS IPA and ISAL service and La Poste Priority and Economy, along with other services from Swiss Post International and other providers. While BWW's use of so many partners and services provides better routing and lower cost of service to its customers, it makes for a challenging operational task.

ID Mail designed a two-stage system that delivered. Using the intuitive MMW touchscreen system with the addition of an OCR imaging camera system, and then a bagging application/workstation, BWW is able to prepare M-Bags in a third of the time previously required. As importantly, M-Bag preparation no longer requires a highly trained operator but instead can be done with a few minutes of instruction. The system design included conveyors and roller-ball workstation desks to reduce operator fatigue and improve ergonomics.

The first step in processing is selecting a customer billing job. This can be done on the touchscreen via a dropdown list or by



MMW station with imaging camera system

scanning a barcode. This ensures that the correct service options and billing data are used for each customer and enables BWW to tailor services to destinations to each customer's needs. After the mail item is put on a scale, the country destination is selected and an image of the destination address is captured for printing on the bag tag. An 8MB colour camera captures an image of the destination address after automatically adjusting for the package height via an ultrasonic sensor and motor controlled mounting arm.

The format of the mail item and unique barcodes can also be captured, and if a CN22 label is required, this data can either be matched to the piece and printed, or manually captured at this time and then printed on the label. Optional OCR can read the name and address if the application requires it. A piece ID barcode is printed to the left of the indicia for matching at the bagging station. The mail item is then transferred to the bagging station by a conveyor.



M-Bag bagging station and bag rack

On its arrival, a second operator scans the barcode, and an image of the address label is displayed for printing, along with all appropriate labels and pictures of the front and back of the specific M-Bag tags and bag for the service for this destination. This enables the bagging operator to quickly prepare the correct tag and bag and finalise the M-Bag for shipment. Processing data for postal manifesting or customer reporting is automatically captured without any further entry by the operator. Ergonomically designed workstations and bag racks enhance productivity, helping to achieve a 200 to 300 percent increase in operator processing speed.

Mike McCue, BWW Philadelphia operations manager, comments: "With the new MMW/M-Bag systems, our team can much more quickly process M-Bags with integrated quality checks." ID Mail will install two more systems for BWW in its Chicago and Los Angeles hubs.

This spring, ID Mail will make available a new option for this system that will enable processing of the USPS E-packet service on this system with full data capture, reporting and label creation.

FIND OUT MORE

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