



Without the address nothing goes well – how the distributor Dohmen gets rid of "bad" addresses

In only about six weeks Dohmen Distribution managed the integration of Uniserv's address management software onto its AS/400. By means of the new IBM feature PASE, the UNIX software post runs natively on the IBM server.



Due to strong expansion, the Garching distribution and fulfillment specialist Emil Dohmen GmbH increasingly found itself confronted with wrong, obsolete and nonsense addresses. The "bad" addresses burdened the services with costs, led to delays and reduced the service quality. Under the motto "You do the manufacturing and selling, we'll do the rest!" Dohmen Distribution has since its founding taken charge of all standardized parts of customer care for clients from the most diverse sectors. After modest beginnings with a handful of clients and fundamental services such as telephone ordering, commissioning, mailing and invoicing for the publishing sector, the company has successively expanded and professionalized its service spectrum. Today, as information and logistic service provider, it offers a total of 40 clients support in the three business sectors "Corporate Fashion", "Entertainment" and "Telco/IT/E-Commerce/Consumer Goods".

Martin Kahr, managing director for IT issues, puts it in a nutshell: "The logistics were simplified, the costs reduced and the quality increased."

Addresses played a decisive role there from the beginning, for without a correct postal address, comprehensive customer care e.g. including the delivery of goods, credit standing check or invoicing cannot even be conceived. Initially the address volume was still small and therefore easy to handle manually. With the growth of the business, the address pool also grows: "Other than via the telephone, order card and fax, addresses nowadays reach us via notebook from sales representatives, via individual EDI interfaces by the client or by the customer via Internet-shop in business-to-business and business-to-consumer applications", explains Kuno Neumeier, director of business development. On a permanent basis there are about 800,000 addresses to manage, for special

campaigns up to 5 million addresses. This data is managed in Dohmen's own computer center on an AS/400. All 90 internal users and the 40 clients are connected online with the AS/400. The addresses are mainly German data, the quality of which often leaves something to be desired. The causes leading to postal contamination and duplicates are always the same: data entry and typing mistakes, hearing errors or nonsense orders. The renaming of streets, postal code changes or incorporations also caused difficulties.

Deficient "address hygiene"

A false postal address at Dohmen wanders like a ghost through the entire service process chain and causes quite some trouble in the most various places. Each individual address is the reference criterion on which the steps of the service change are oriented. If an address is not right, the entire process is protracted, starting from the customer to the collection office. Higher costs and risks are incurred, e.g. through high return rates or with the creditworthiness check. Moreover, there is a danger that the goods will be delivered late or that the customer will not receive them at all. Or they will be delivered to the wrong customer. Apart from this material damage, the immaterial damage should not be underestimated that is caused by late, misdirected or double mailings. The annoyance is great. "Bad addresses would clearly slow down our process chain, making it more ineffective and expensive, which would be a burden on our service quality", explains Martin Kahr, managing director at Dohmen for IT issues.

The specter of false addresses

Against this background, the Dohmen specialists began to search for a suitable software solution. The requirements were clearly outlined from the beginning. The solution would have to reliably and surely gain



control over the latent address management problems with high performance. It had to be easily and quickly integratable into the existing AS/400 environment, without additional time- and effort-consuming software and hardware configurations. Moreover, the solution would have to have an API for mass data. Another demand was that the address data could be cleansed both in batch and also online, both on the intranet and on the Internet. And, last but not least, the entire implementation from the first tests to the activation should be realizable as fast as possible. Against this background, the Uniserv solution post (postal validation) was very quickly deemed to be the best. "We especially liked the fact that Uniserv is well-versed in the topic of AS/400 and with the standard Java API as well as the possibility of working with PASE. The preconditions for a fast implementation and thus for a smooth solution to our latent address management problem were fulfilled without any restrictions", Mr. Kahr recalls.

Strict schedule

The final decisive factor was the very tight time schedule situation. Thanks to the close collaboration between the specialists of both companies, according to Mr. Kahr, from Systems 2000 on, beginning with the test phase for Dohmen Distribution, it did not even take six weeks until post was fully productive in the AS/400 environment. The Unix version of post is now installed in the PASE environment directly on the AS/400. The performance is outstanding. The products are supplemented by Masterfile and the freight table. Masterfile is Uniserv's own proprietary street directory of Germany, the most complete and comprehensive collection of data of its kind. For the postal validation this file provides a previously unattained high test quality on the levels of the street, house number, postal code and city. Incorporations, renaming of streets or changes in the postal code are no longer an issue. The freight table automatically assigns the mail items to the lead code of the corresponding freight center of Deutsche Post AG, making the work much easier for service providers with high mailing volumes. With the introduction of post, a stop has now indeed been put to wrong addresses. If an end-consumer or storeowner orders goods via the Internet, the address will first be validated before the data is accepted for further processing.

A PIONIER Achievement: UNISERV uses PASE

The Portable Application Solutions Environment (PASE) describes a component integrated into OS/400, with the aid of which AIX applications can be used directly on the AS/400. For the installation no knowledge of Unix is necessary, because the application appears to the user as an AS/400 application. Uniserv is worldwide the first provider of address management solutions to provide via PASE its own UNIX products for direct use on the AS/400. Available are the postal validation post, the duplicate check mail and the integrated direct marketing workbench click it.