



Case Study: Hardware titan streamlines mail

Retail hardware chain store makes disruption-free transition to faster, more secured mail delivery

About our customer

This privately held tool and equipment retailer operates a chain of retail stores across 48 U.S. states, as well as a successful e-commerce business. Today, the retailer has approximately 26,000 employees, 1,400 stores, and 75 million customers and is committed to delivering quality tools, accessories and numerous products under in-house brands sourced directly from manufacturers.

Challenge

- **Slowdown in accounts payable:** Manual delivery to AP departments across 1,400 stores caused delays in invoice processing
- **Security vulnerability:** Staff picking up sensitive mail raised concerns about confidentiality and compliance
- **Remote work hurdles:** Not equipped to meet the growing needs of a dispersed workforce, hindering efficiency and accessibility
- **Delivery uncertainty:** Ensuring mail reached employees lacked chain of custody

Challenged with handling roughly 1,500-2,000 pieces of inbound mail each month – AP (Accounts Payable) correspondence, in particular – The retailer needed a solution that would expedite and secure information sharing across its network of retail locations and remote employees. Such a solution would not only accelerate payment processing, but ideally, “increase the productivity of our employees by empowering them to make digital-based decisions and collaborate more effectively from anywhere,” Facilities Manager.

Moving to a remote workforce, the retailer was also faced not only with the timely sharing of information and processing of payments, but also the security of the proprietary data circulated via the USPS. Knowing that more efficient processes would yield cost savings, the company was also interested in a solution that could provide insights into their mail processing patterns and what efficiencies could be realized by re-examining those processes.

Solution

- Digital visibility and enhanced control via hybrid mailroom
- Secured mail delivery routing and validation to designated recipients
- Compliant and optimized workflows across departments with Intelligent Delivery Service dashboard and Microsoft Active Directory File System for authentication

With a complete understanding of the hardware chain's needs gleaned from a consultation with their leadership, the Ricoh team recommended its Intelligent Delivery Services (IDS) to automate the management of the company's mailroom. This would streamline the intake and delivery of inbound communication and increase efficiency by providing analytics-driven insights into processing patterns and turnaround times. The solution would also offer them the added benefit of Microsoft Active Directory, which would assign and enforce security policies for all their computers, as well as install and update software.

“Like any retailer, or any business for that matter, success hinges on a company's ability to process payments and manage cash flow. With Ricoh's IDS, we enhanced the operation of our AP department so that they could receive and process very time-sensitive mail within 24 hours.”

- Facilities Manager

Results

- **Faster decision-making:** Prompt delivery of invoices to 24 hours enabled quicker financial decisions, optimizing cash flow
- **Enhanced security:** Robust security measures mitigated privacy risks and improved adherence to data protection policies
- **Empowered workforce:** Anytime, anywhere access to mail fostered more agile and efficient work
- **Improved trust and accountability:** Full transparency and chain of custody in mail handling instilled confidence in secured document management and regulatory compliance

The implementation of IDS transformed workflows and significantly cut down on those many opportunities where mail can get lost, put in the wrong hands, or not responded to promptly.

Before IDS, the retailer could only hope that inbound communication would reach the right recipient in the right place at the right time. The company was concerned about chain of custody and the security of information being shared across numerous remote locations. According to the retailer's Facilities Manager, “We also wanted to know more about our entire inbound communication processes. Could we do things better? Until IDS, there was no way of knowing.”

“With IDS, we are seeing our mail delivered to our AP department faster and more securely than ever before. But that’s not the only benefit. We now have a platform that is continuously learning, enabling us to identify and act on frequent behaviors and recurring preferences. IDS’s intuitive dashboard empowers management to view and track performance trends, analyze data, and monitor productivity in near real-time,” said the retailer’s Facilities Manager. “These efficiencies put less strain on our resources, both human and financial.”

“The Ricoh mailroom solution has completely transformed how we manage incoming mail. We now have 100% mail delivery to our Accounts Payable group within 24 hours, along with efficient and secure mail delivery of inbound correspondence across over 1,400 locations and 26,000 employees with anytime, anywhere access along with a full audit trail with chain of custody.”

— Facilities Manager



Explore more about the ways you can transform your inbound communication management with Ricoh’s [Intelligent Delivery Services](#).

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