PING® ensures round-the-clock production with Loftware Cloud

Loftware Cloud helps leading golf club manufacturer reduce label creation time from two weeks to one day.

Introduction

PING, Inc. is a family-owned company and a recognized leader in the golf equipment industry. Founded in 1959, PING is dedicated to engineering the highest-performing golf equipment in the world. The company is headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona in the United States, and has production facilities and offices in Gainsborough, England; Tokyo, Japan; and Ontario, Canada.

PING's goal is to produce more than 10,000 golf clubs a day in the U.S. alone. Each golf club begins with a work order tag – a barcode label containing all the specifications employees need to build each club. The barcode steers the entire golf club building workflow, which means it is critical for production. PING prints thousands of these labels round-the-clock in its production facilities in the US, UK, Canada, and Japan.
|To accommodate the increase in demand brought on by the COVID 19-pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, PING expanded production hours to include longer days and weekends. The company needed a labeling system that could provide global support 24/7 for its expanding production.

Challenges & solutions

IT support for a 24/7 production process
Before selecting Loftware Cloud, PING's print server went down in North America. The company that typically serviced their print server had a help desk in France that was open on weekdays from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm local time. Without local IT support they couldn't get the help they needed to print tags, so they had to stop production. When PING began its search for a new labeling system, the most important requirement was local IT support. PING needed a service provider who could offer 24/7 support in all their production locations. Loftware Cloud's services team was able to work with PING during the entire new labeling system implementation process and provide them with the support they needed to ensure continuous production.

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Our hardware manager came to me and said production requested two more RFID printers. I handed him the list of the drivers available on Loftware Cloud and said, 'Go, pick what you want.' Part of our vision was to get the pieces in place so that when we change what's providing the data, we know whichever system we choose can communicate with Loftware Cloud."

Jeff Baranczyk
Senior Product Owner, PING, Inc.

A print server that grows with their business
When PING purchased their previous print server, they were just opening their new offices in the UK and Japan and were only using about half of the available production capacity in their US office. So, they purchased a server that could support a maximum of 100 printers. In the decade that followed, PING's production expanded considerably, and they needed a labeling system that could support more printers. With Loftware Cloud, PING can use up to 150 printers now, which supports their current production needs and even gives them more room to grow.

A printer-agnostic labeling system
PING's previous labeling system only supported one particular brand of printer. Trying to make other printers work with this legacy system required considerable programming time and resources. While this wasn't an issue in the US where the printer brand was widely available and inexpensive, it did pose a problem in the UK and Japan locations where the printer brand was less widespread

and far more expensive. With Loftware Cloud's industry-leading family of print drivers, today PING can print to any device, including color printers, and coding and marking devices. Now, when the company needs to source RFID printers, employees can choose the printer that is best suited for their needs.

Improving print performance
Before implementing Loftware Cloud, the production team had issues with print speed. While individual batches printed without issue, it would still take eight minutes or more in between batches which resulted in lost time waiting on tags to print and considerably slowed down production impacting sales and revenue. Loftware Cloud's native print drivers helped PING get the fastest label printing possible from their existing printers. So, instead of waiting for batches to print, labels can print so quickly that employees have asked if IT can slow the system down a bit, just so they can keep up.

Simplifying troubleshooting and label creation
In addition to improved printing speed, round-the-clock support and greater printer brand flexibility, the PING production team wanted better visibility into the printing process. Previously, if a print job failed, the team had no means, or starting point, to investigate printing status or troubleshoot what went wrong. PING was also looking to enhance the configurability of its label creation process which in the previous system took weeks to implement, making it difficult for PING to react quickly to new customer or market demands. If the business needed a new label type or format, the IT department couldn't reasonably meet their needs. Loftware Cloud however includes a dashboard that gives PING complete visibility over each and every print job. If an error does occur, the team can investigate immediately. The system also offers a full range of reporting features, so PING has full transparency over when and where labels are printed and by whom. Loftware Cloud's built-in label designer is easy to use, and staff can quickly create and deploy labels the same day, something which would have taken at least two weeks in the previous system.

Results

Cloud labeling gives regional offices flexibility
Placing their business systems in the cloud made it easier to support PING's different geographic locations. Before implementing Loftware Cloud, PING had limited and more siloed label creation. Now, IT managers in the UK and Japan have the flexibility to be able to design their own labels, switch out printers, and adjust formats to match their local business needs.

Building an IT platform for the future
By selecting Loftware Cloud, PING values having a reliable labeling system they can further build on in the future as the company continues to grow. PING is planning to overhaul its ERP system in 2023, and the fact that Loftware Cloud integrates seamlessly with all the major ERP systems gives them added peace of mind.
They are confident that whichever system manages their label data will be able to seamlessly communicate with Loftware Cloud.

With Loftware Cloud, PING achieved the following results:

→ IT support for 24/7 production

→ Increased label print speed

→ A flexible and future-proof IT infastructure that matches regional business needs

→ Improved print performance and print job visibility

→ Reduced label creation process from weeks to one day

→ Future-proof IT infastructure

Loftware is the global leader in product identification. Our cloud-based solutions power real-time collaboration, ensure compliance, improve authenticity, and deliver supply chain traceability from product development to consumer engagement. We provide scalable, data-driven labeling and packaging technologies that help companies boost speed to market, enhance efficiency, and connect physical products to digital experiences. Trusted by global brands and backed by over 40 years of innovation, Loftware supports customers across industries with offices in the US, UK, Slovenia, China, and Singapore.