



CASE STUDY

Datamax MP-Series Provides Printing Solution for High-Volume Swedish Shippers

Fifty thousand Swedish shipping companies can't be wrong. They're all using an online transportation management system called Pacsoft Online, a software solution from Unifaun AB that is provided by the Swedish Post Office to its customers. Unifaun's Pacsoft Online enables Swedish shippers to conform to the Swedish Post Office's stringent package labeling requirements. When it comes to small shippers with limited numbers of packages, the majority are able to print package labels on a standard, desktop laser printer. However, for larger shippers—those printing 50 labels or more per day—a standard desktop printer is not a viable option.

Staffan Isaksson, Unifaun's CEO, is in the business of developing cutting-edge software; he doesn't make printers, although he needs to sell them, along with labels, to satisfy the requirements of his customer, the Swedish Post Office. As such, Isaksson is beholden to the Swedish Post Office to find a thermal printer that meets the demands of the large shippers using Pacsoft Online. "Our focus is on selling software, not printers," says Isaksson. "Therefore, we had to find an industrial-hardened, thermal printer that would absolutely meet the needs of bulk shippers, while giving us the freedom to pursue our core competency."

Isaksson's objective was clear: Unifaun had to find a compact, durable, and robust thermal printer for high-volume Swedish shippers. To find the best printer, Staffan tested most of the printers on the European market. "Our tests were designed to help us find a printer that had unmatched durability and quality so that our customers wouldn't have any trouble with it after the purchase," he says.

The results of those tests led Isaksson to select the Datamax MP family of printers, which consists of the Compact series and the Nova series. Isaksson specifically honed in on the Compact4 MP Series Printer as a suitable workhorse for large-scale Swedish shippers. The reason is easy to understand. The Compact4 printer provides Isaksson's target—the high-volume shipper—with unmatched rugged and reliable performance in a compact footprint. "The Compact4 is perfectly suited to the needs of the Swedish Post Office customer who ships from 50 to 500 packages per day," says Isaksson.



Compact4

Trouble-Free Printer

Today, more than seven years after Isaksson's initial tests, there are more than 1,000 Swedish shippers using Datamax's Compact4 printers in warehouses across Sweden. "Since 2001, we've installed more than 500 Compact4 printers in Swedish warehouses," says Isaksson. "In all that time, we've only heard of one printer being damaged as a result of rough use. Meanwhile, 25 out of 500 printers made by a different printer company have failed."

Isaksson adds, "We've had virtually no trouble with Datamax printers, and that's important to us. We can't afford to have any trouble with the printers we sell."

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Heavy Duty Lightweight

While the durability of the Compact4 is a point of satisfaction for Isaksson, the Swedish shippers who use the printer on a daily basis are pleased with it for a number of additional reasons. Able to deliver continuous operation, the Compact4 is the printer of choice in Swedish warehouses, according to Isaksson, where ease-of-use, reliability, and high performance are a must. Further, the aptly named Compact4 is ideally suited for the high-volume thermal printing requirements of Swedish shippers, especially for on-demand printing where space is limited. "Typically, packing stations in Swedish warehouses are small. The Compact4 fits easily in tight spaces," says Isaksson.

Another key benefit for large-scale shippers that want to increase the speed and efficiency of their pick and pack warehouse operations is the ability of the Compact4 to be installed on forklift trucks. The Compact4 printer is the only printer that Isaksson tested that could operate from a connection to a forklift's battery and has the vibration-proof design to stand up to the demands of mobile warehouse logistics.

Isaksson describes how one Swedish mail order company has achieved success by mounting Compact4 printers on all of their forklifts: "Using a hand-held barcode scanner, a warehouseman is able to maneuver around a warehouse with a Compact4 printer mounted to the forklift. The Pacsoft Online system provides the printer with



the correct layout and correct label for the item being picked. Using this system, the forklift driver is able to pick the needed item from the shelf, and then immediately print and affix a label. This method saves time and increases the efficiency of warehouse operations."

Designer Label

Another important aspect of the Swedish Post Office shipping application is the shipping label itself. The Swedish Post Office has very specific requirements when it comes to the label's content and size. "One thing that is specific to this application is the label length—it is quite long," Isaksson explains. "In Sweden, a shipping label has a length of 250mm versus only 200mm in the rest of Europe."



The Compact4 and the Nova4 are engineered to handle a label of this length. They also have a unique design that does not require labels to be rolled. Instead, due to the unique size of the label, Isaksson specifies that the labels be folded and placed in a carton directly behind the printer. "Because of the label's extreme length, we don't use rolled label material. We don't want or need a bulky printer designed to house a big roll of labels—there's no need for label material to be rolled up inside the printer in this application."

With the virtually flawless performance of the Datamax MP Series, Isaksson has achieved his goal of finding a printer that meets the needs of the Swedish Post Office's customers, while freeing him to focus on software development. Today, the Datamax Compact4 and the Nova4 printers are the only printers Isaksson recommends for high-volume shipping applications. "We don't see that changing," Isaksson concludes, "because we haven't had any trouble with the Datamax printers. There are no other printers that could do more to benefit our customers." ■

COMPACT4 MOBILE

- Direct thermal label printer uniquely designed for forklifts and mobile stations
- Special anti-vibration quick-lock mounting plate
- Runs on 24-48 VDC: connects directly to a forklift battery
- Print resolution: 200/ 300 dpi
- Max print width: 4.1" (104 mm)
- Print speed: up to 4.9"/s (125 mm/s)
- 2 high speed serial interfaces, USB and Ethernet ports

NOVA4

- Robust, high-performance thermal transfer and direct thermal printers
- 4.1" (104 mm) print width
- Print resolution: 200 or 300 dpi
- Print speed: 9.8"/s (up to 250 mm/s)
- Prints texts, logos, barcodes and graphics
- 10 scalable fonts are standard
- Resident barcodes, including several 2-dimensional and stacked codes (QR code, PDF 417, Datamatrix, Maxicode, EAN 13, etc.)
- 2 high speed serial interfaces, USB and Ethernet ports

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