

Van Hage Cultivates Loyalty With Zebra® Card Printer

With almost 60-years of experience at the cutting edge of garden and leisure retailing, Van Hage is at the forefront of the horticulture industry. The business has grown into one of the UK's largest garden and leisure retailers. In 2010 it opened a new store in Peterborough to complement its two existing Hertfordshire outlets and online operations.

To satisfy its rapidly expanding customer base in its Peterborough store, Van Hage offers its 'Enjoy the Privilege' loyalty scheme to retain regular customers, develop new business and enable analysis of customer shopping habits as part of its database marketing activity.

Previously relying on an outsourced card bureau to develop and issue its loyalty cards, Van Hage now uses a state-of-the-art Zebra ZXP Series 8 card printer. This solution has had significant cost and time savings, whilst improving the overall customer loyalty experience.

The Challenge

Van Hage issues around 10,000 customer loyalty cards each year and the demand for these can escalate quickly when large numbers of new customers visit the Peterborough store.

Previously, the company outsourced its loyalty card development and issuance to a local printing company at considerable cost and time. This organisation would then issue loyalty cards to customers taken from a list of those who had recently signed up.

Significant time was then spent generating and formatting the file for the local printer. Delays were often accentuated when Van Hage had to consolidate card orders from a number of quiet trading weeks to meet the minimum printing quota imposed on them by their print provider.

Subsequently temporary cards and registration numbers had to be issued to customers using a basic desktop printer. This meant they often had to wait beyond the 28 day waiting period stipulated for the issue of a permanent card hence failing in their service promise.

The Solution

Van Hage's ICT Manager, Chris Luther had seen Zebra printers working in different environments. Having researched various reviews he decided to trial a demonstration ZXP Series 8 card printer and CardStudio software to evaluate the ease of use, speed and quality of its card printing capabilities.

Chris soon discovered he could use CardStudio software to link directly to their customer marketing system; now checkout staff can produce cards on demand with a ZXP Series 8 printer within 20 to 30 seconds of the customer request.



Solution Technology

- Zebra® ZXP Series 8™ card printer
- Zebra® CardStudio™ Professional software
- Zebra® card supplies



With an initial run of 1500 cards, Van Hage feels the ZXP Series 8 card printer can handle large batch print jobs without interruption. The cards were found to be of the highest quality and contained an instantly allocated customer number which links back to the EPOS (electronic point of sale) system to enable marketing database analysis.

The ZXP Series 8 card printer has generated significant cost savings for Van Hage. Previously running to almost £3 per card, the Peterborough store can now print cards for around £0.61 which includes the cost of the printer and consumables!

The Benefits

- **Personalised loyalty cards** carrying your brand image issued on demand.
- **Targeted database marketing.** The embedded customer spending details are registered at the tills for targeted database marketing.
- **Fast printing** allows each store to issue permanent loyalty cards to new customers in seconds without incurring extra printing process administration.
- **80% cost reduction.** Internally produced cards remove the need for costly print service outsourcing. Van Hage performed a cost analysis of 1000 cards. Previously £2.97 per card they have now been reduced to around £0.61 which includes printer and consumables costs.
- **Flexibility.** Rapid printing of multiple cards allows Van Hage stores to accommodate sudden customer influxes at peak times.
- **Enhanced customer satisfaction.** The loyalty cards are durable, with a high quality look and feel and can be issued immediately for use.
- **Minimal downtime.** Internal card issuing can function continuously and requires little downtime during maintenance.

Quote

“We performed a cost analysis of over 1000 cards and once the printer and consumables costs are taken into account we’re saving around £2.50 each time we print a card.

We’re also saving many man hours each week by not having to issue large batches of temporary cards at peak times and customers love seeing them printed out in front of them!”

**Chris Luther,
ICT Manager,
Van Hage Garden Centres,
United Kingdom.**

