



CASE STUDY

On the road again: full throttle at the petrol station shop... with no fuel required

The filling stations division of the medium-sized company team energie GmbH & Co. KG is developing innovative concepts for its filling stations – and Panasonic Connect is helping with the implementation.

Client: team energie GmbH & Co. KG

Location: Flensburg, Germany

Product(s) supplied: **Electronic Shelf Labels**

Challenge

To create a wireless connection to a pre-installed POS system to automatically update the price display in the petrol station shop at any time without errors.

Solution

Panasonic Connect developed, installed and now operates a turnkey system: electronic shelf labels that are directly connected to the central POS system to reduce errors in price labelling, optimise product presentation in the shop and open up new potential for marketing campaigns and market research studies.

"We want to break new ground in medium-sized companies and, with Panasonic, we are calling on a professional partner whose service best fits our requirements."

Benjamin Perner, Category Manager at team energie GmbH & Co. KG

Every day, up to 900 customers shop at the petrol station, mostly families and tradespeople from the Flensburg area. The range available in the petrol station shop is adapted to local tastes and also covers the needs of regular customers from nearby Denmark, responding promptly to current trends. To respond to these different needs, the company now has more than 1000 products available, about as much as a discount retailer, but over an area of just 100 m², about 10% of the size of a supermarket.

"In a petrol station shop, you don't have the luxury of space, but customers still expect innovations and trends – like iced tea last year that suddenly became popular and everyone had to have on offer," explains Perner. The 35-year-old has been working as the Category Manager at team energie GmbH & Co. KG for 4 years.



He describes how this fast pace increases the pressure to manage the space efficiently. If the gap between fast-sellers and shelfwarmers gets shorter and shorter, special demands are placed on the shop layout. As a result, the price labelling is not always consistent, even in combination with products only available regionally. Perner sees a great advantage in the new system, which was implemented with the help of Panasonic Connect, especially when it comes to tackling this challenge. "With the switch to the electronic shelf labels and the deliberate choice not to use different labels, we also create certainty when pricing the products, keep things flexible if the range changes and still keep the shop set out tidily."

Panasonic's engineering team worked with the client to create specific label designs, such as shelf labels that display several products at the same time and fit perfectly into the shelf layout. Features such as NFC and QR codes with the labels were also introduced. And these, like conventional electronic shelf labels, can be controlled centrally. Perner's conclusion is therefore a positive one "The products look better on the shelf and, above all, they are clearly legible next to each other for customers. The shop looks neater, price adjustments can only be made by authorised personnel and the displays cannot be simply moved," he explains.



Fewer mistakes, time saved and better service for the customer

More than 800 price tags were installed and set up – and it took just one day to get them up and running. The petrol station in Flensburg was used for a pilot. "First of all, we wanted to understand what we could do and what we need," Perner sums up. The ESLs are now used where it makes sense, for example in the beverage, hanging goods and checkout areas.

The connection to the POS system played a decisive role in this. The medium-sized company has been working successfully with Huth for more than 20 years. Together with Huth, the Panasonic Connect engineering team developed the backend solution for team energie GmbH & Co. KG. The focus was on the goal of being price-correct, i.e. working in a compliance-proof manner. "In the POS system, the prices are always stored correctly, and our goal now was to make the shelf labels synchronise fully automatically with the POS," says IT specialist Jens-Michael Pohl, project manager for the Panasonic System engineering team.

In addition to reducing errors, the aim was to minimise the manual work needed, so we could spend more time on our customers. After just one month of test operation, the company can draw its initial conclusion. "The 15 minutes of time saved per day for employees has now become almost 30 minutes, which employees can spend on other tasks," explains Jens-Michael Pohl.

The ESLs offer even more. Among other things, they can be used to drive targeted promotions: the shelf labels can also become special offer signs at the push of a button – with glowing red prices and a red frame. "Last year, the checkout area lost out – customer preferences have changed, sales of chewing gum have steadily declined and confectionery manufacturers have had few innovations for consumers. We now want to turn this around through promotions and targeted offers," explains Benjamin Perner. He stresses, "At the moment, we want to play around with the designs here to highlight where the novelties are placed, where the customers benefit from promotions. But we want to work with dynamic pricing in the future to highlight special products and deals and to measure whether there are any effects that reinforce each other." Last but not least, the manager sees further sales and marketing potential here: by accessing the transaction server, team energie GmbH & Co. KG energy has the opportunity to conduct market research and even send special offers to regular customers in some cases.



In addition, the shelf labels offer another direct advantage that customers will notice right away. "With the supplier of our premium lubricants and engine oils, we have linked a QR code to a search page for oil types that customers use to help them find the right engine oil for their cars," says Perner. That is just one example: more will follow soon. Currently, the NFCs, which are automatically installed in all labels, still link to the company's Facebook page – further applications are currently in the pipeline. With the ESLs, they can be adjusted at any time and without errors.

Together with POS manufacturer Huth and the technicians at team energie GmbH & Co. KG, the solution was individually optimized for the needs on site. In addition to the 800 labels, the solution also includes shelf brackets and systems, a connection to the cloud via two vCloud access points and barcode scanners with internet access.

