



# C&A introduces Managed Print Services

As leading fashion retailer, C&A is currently going through a transition. A number of back office processes (logistics, SAP etc.) are undergoing a digital transformation. This can also be seen in the shops, with changes including a new till system and Managed Print Services. C&A chooses for Bechtel to work on this transformation.

## Innovation in the business

‘Our business is run by people who manufacture and sell clothing. However, IT does have an important supporting role’, says Geert Van Buggenhout, System Administrator and Project Coordinator at Logibel C&A. C&A Belgium tends to be more pioneering in terms of innovation than other countries in the group and often gets the pilot project. ‘We test tools, fix the teething problems before it gets rolled out on a European level. This does put some pressure on our relatively small IT department, making us look for external partners to collaborate with. One good example is a recent app that allows employees in the stores to see how they should present the products on the tables. ‘In the past this was done using photographs that were sent to them’, says Geert Van Buggenhout.

## Improved management of printers

One of the challenges associated with the transition is the management of printers. Before this project there were a diverse range of printers in the stores: different manufacturers, different types and multiple printing technologies. They were also standalone devices and were not linked to the head office. Geert summarises the situation in the past: ‘We could not see the status of the various printers, every store ordered toner and cartridges at their own convenience, and error messages came through to us (too) late.’

## New till, new printers

One recent IT project has been the renewal of the till system. ‘We took this opportunity to roll out a project at the same time and replaced all the printers with network printers. This is being done in collaboration with Bechtel. An All-in-One solution from HP was chosen, with PageWide technology. ‘These devices meet our criteria perfectly: they start up quickly, they allow us to move away from laser technology and we don’t need so many toner cartridges, which means we create less waste. Thanks to a touch screen, they are also easy to operate. It is almost like a home printer.’

” When the pressure of work increases and you have to manage with reduced staffing levels, you look for an external partner who you can always rely on. That partner was found by extending the collaboration with Bechtel. ”

Geert Van Buggenhout  
System Administrator and Project  
Coordinator,  
Logibel C&A.

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Monitoring was another important requirement. Thanks to the network connection, C&A now has a clear overview of all its printers. Some aspects have been automated. For example, Bechtle receives an automated message as soon as the ink level falls to 13%, after which they send a new toner cartridge to the store. 'This offers huge benefits in terms of stock management. Now printer supplies are only ordered when necessary, while in the past there were an average of five toner cartridges in a cupboard in each store. That was dead capital, so this approach results in cost savings for us. Now we can see errors (even before the stores notice them) and we can also reset the printer remotely if necessary.'

### More time for customers

Simplifying supplies administration is not the only advantage offered by the All-in-One approach. The devices replace a number of different machines (fax, printer, scanner, etc.) and therefore take up less space. 'Having more compact devices frees up more space in the store for sales. For a retail chain, that is ultimately what we are about. Other advantages of the HP devices is that they are more reliable and that it is very easy to change the ink cartridges. As a result, our employees in the stores don't waste as much time on technical interventions, leaving them free to spend more time offering advice to customers. In a store you need to be selling.'

### Valued proactivity

Geert summarises the added value offered by Bechtle in this project: 'A very reliable partner with a highly personal approach. You are not just a number to them. They never challenge the question you are asking. They look for a solution first and only afterwards consider how the same problem could be avoided in the future. Also there are no delays in the support process. If a store needs a technician, they go to the site immediately. When it comes to an escalation I only have to call one person, and I am not transferred from one to another.'

Thanks to the monitoring function, Bechtle can also see quickly which devices are printing more than expected. Bechtle then works proactively in collaboration with their service partner ARP to replace the printer or exchange it for one from another store. This means all the printers have approximately the same life cycle. One thing I definitely want to mention as a plus point is the dynamic folder of agreed actions and procedures. Thanks to this up-to-date playbook, everyone knows what action to take in every situation.'

### Road map for the future

Implementation of the 190 new network printers is almost complete, with ten stores still to make the change. The IT department is now looking at new features on the printers, which means that some processes can be partly automated. Examples include sending job sheets or sending sick notes to the HR department. In the past these always had to go to the head office by post. With the AIO network printers employees will be able to scan these documents and email them directly to HR in future.

On a European level, C&A is probably going to opt for HP in all locations. Since a new till system is being installed in the Netherlands next year, the Belgian team will probably be seeing a similar a roll-out in the Netherlands.



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### Who is C&A?

C&A is a Dutch fashion retail chain which was founded more than 150 years ago by the brothers Clemens & August Brenninkmeijer. It is still a family business and has grown to become a market leader in fashion retailing. C&A now has a presence in 18 European countries, with 1,575 stores. There are currently about 120 stores in Belgium, with an online platform. C&A is strongly committed to sustainability. Alongside the climate, C&A also aims to have a sustainable production chain and sustainable products. It is the largest supplier of organic cotton apparel in the world.

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