Unlocking Efficiency: Streamlining Remote Employee Asset Returns for a Multinational

Whether a company buys or leases IT assets, at the end of the primary lifecycle the objective is the same: get the asset back in good condition in a timely manner. But that task often becomes considerably more complicated when it involves employees working remotely, either out of their home or traveling as part of a field service operation.

Onepak's client, a multinational company in the HVAC industry, has hundreds of technicians and sales professionals who work remotely. They are all outfitted with a laptop and sometimes a printer and extra monitor. All equipment comes back every two or three years at the end of lease or for a refresh. Onepak fills a prominent blind spot in IT asset management, adding transparency and control to the reverse logistics process of getting equipment back for lease return, repair or replacement—even one asset at a time. This role is clear and neutral: to provide clients with timely, convenient service and validated online information about their equipment shipments.

The Challenge

The coronavirus pandemic added millions of Americans to the ranks of field service and other remote employees who must return equipment securely and in a timely fashion so their employer doesn't incur financial penalties.

Remote employees who rarely if ever visit a company office are often on their own when it comes time to return a piece of equipment. They must do all the work—generate a label or have one sent to them, find adequate packaging in which to ship it, take it to UPS or FedEx themselves. They must eventually be reimbursed by the company or provided access to resources paid for by their employer.

The downsides for their employer: either leaving it up to the employee with no visibility whatsoever, or generating skads of labels and then relying on a torrent

of individual emails to try to keep track of where everything is in the process. This haphazard method is extremely inefficient, uncontrollable and lacks accountability and validation (did they really send it?). And it can easily lead to equipment that is damaged in transit, because employees generally send the material in packaging that is neither designed nor constructed for protecting that device. The larger the company, the more complicated this becomes.

The Solution

Onepak's solution was to provide the company a private online ReturnCenter to which only their employees have access. Remote employees log in to request a specialized shipping kit that is the proper size and configuration for their asset, with a pre-paid, pre-addressed shipping label. If they have a laptop to return, they get a laptop shipping kit (shipped the next business day), so it's well-protected during the return. And an asset manager can track the outbound and return shipments right online.

The Advantage

The client has a standardized process and one online location for employees to go when they need to return equipment. They are authorized through whatever method the employer decides—whether it's an employee number, an asset number or other business rule. It's all done in a secure, cloud-based environment.

No longer must the company try to keep track of a flurry of individual items on an ad hoc basis. Instead, armed with the ReturnCenter, the manager responsible for overseeing this process—typically either an HR person or IT asset manager—can log in and see what was ordered, what kind of shipping kit was sent, when it was delivered and when it was returned. They have full on-demand activity reporting.

As an added benefit, sustainability is built into the entire system. Onepak has engineered all its reverse logistics processes to be fully carbon-neutral—the company offsets the carbon footprint on both the packaging and the shipping of these units.

By having all these data points in one place for all IT asset shipment activity, clients enjoy the convenience of only one bill to pay with complete visibility and accountability at every point of the process.

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