

Editor: Mr. Walko, ICA is one of the leading European system suppliers for ticket vending machines. What exactly are the requirements of the transport companies and operating companies of these vending machines?

Mr. Walko: ICA is intensively and continuously engaged with the current and future market requirements in the field of public transport. By closely communicating with the operating companies and receiving feedback from their end customers, we gain valuable insights into the current and future requirements of ticket vending machines. End customers today expect and appreciate user-friendly operation, fast and reliable transaction processing, and a wide range of payment options. In turn, these factors help the operating company to increase customer satisfaction. Operating companies are also focusing on high availability, low maintenance costs, and increased security against vandalism and theft, which ultimately enables higher revenues.

Editor: How does ICA respond to the myriad of different requirements in the market?

Mr. Walko: With the "Dualis 2000S" stationary vending machine, we relied on a modular design to meet current as well as future market requirements. This is also something we take into account when selecting new components. Today, we are offering innovative technologies such as electronic ticketing, state-of-the-art payment methods and our ECOLINE+, which significantly reduces power consumption.

Editor: As COO at ICA, you played an instrumental role in the decision to work with CI Tech Components, a new supplier, to use a completely novel banknote recycler in your ticket vending machines for one of the largest projects in Germany in recent years. What prompted you to do this?

Mr. Walko: The decision was definitely not easy and we were aware that the risk with a new setup is higher than using existing and known systems.

CI Tech Components and its team managed to convince us that they could not only offer us an advantage in some technical functionalities, but also that, just like ICA, they understood and were able to fulfill the entire set of requirements. In addition to the attractive price/performance ratio of the CI Note Line product, our decision was also reinforced by the characteristics of CI Tech Components required for a cooperation, such as reliability, transparency and response time.

Editor: Could you briefly describe what the course of the project was like? There must have certainly been special measures in the process due to the risk you mentioned.

Mr. Walko: You are right about that! Typically, you incorporate tests during development, internal acceptance tests, and initial test installations in the field in small quantities and under real conditions, which are observed and analyzed in great detail, into the project plan. Of course, we followed this approach with CI Tech Components as well.

Editor: And it all went to your complete satisfaction?

Mr. Walko: Achieving the fullest satisfaction in these project phases is nearly impossible, since our goal of improving ourselves and thus gaining an edge over our competition is always in the foreground. Nevertheless, these phases and their typical challenges have been very positive. What must be emphasized, however, is the factual, objective, goal-oriented and open cooperation between the technical teams of both companies. Looking back, I really have to pay a great compliment to both teams. The result of these phases and the consideration of the so-called "soft facts" were finally the decisive factor for starting larger projects with CI Tech Components.

Editor: The rollout of several hundred machines is another "league" than a few test installations...

Mr. Walko: Yes, indeed! This is when we were faced with the real challenges! In addition to production planning, on-time installations and launch of the vending machines, technical reliability and passenger acceptance are of course crucial. Ultimately, it's these criteria that determine our customer's satisfaction.

Editor: Were there any technical reliability issues after the roll-out?

Mr. Walko: The issues were kept within limits, but the performance was not at the level of expectations. However, this did not only affect the banknote recycler, but also other modules and proprietary software packages in our ticket vending machine. The underlying causes were very diverse and varied.

Editor: Did you manage to get these issues under control then?

Mr. Walko: Of course! To stay on the subject of the banknote recycler and the cooperation with CI Tech Components, I have to say that both companies have done and are still doing an outstanding job. Our objective and goal-oriented cooperation, as mentioned above, as well as the continuous field data analyses and improvement measures, which we are still carrying out today, by the way, have in part resulted in the overfulfillment of the original requirements and a very favorable level of customer satisfaction. We are very proud of this at ICA. Even today,

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these customers prefer our solutions, including the banknote recycler, and equip their stations with them. Our customer's satisfaction can be attributed to the fact that they still prefer our solutions, including the banknote recycler, and equip their stations with them today.

Editor: Following this experience, will you be involving CI Tech Components in further projects?

Mr. Walko: Absolutely! We are continuing to enjoy a very close and gratifying collaboration. On the one hand, the technical functionalities, low failure rates and low service costs of the CI Note Line product in real field operation have convinced us, as well as the operating company. On the other hand, we very much value our cooperation with CI Tech Components. This is already reflected in our annual supplier evaluation. Here, taking into account the criteria of quality, costs and schedule reliability, CI Tech Components has earned and deserves our highest rating of 'Excellent'.

Editor: Mr. Walko, another personal question for you. As COO of ICA, you have played a part in leading the company to the top in Europe in the traffic sector and keeping it here. What other goals can there be now?

Mr. Walko: Further expansion and development of the market positioning is of course always a goal of ours. Future major projects and ensuring lasting, successful business relationships are part of our daily business and always present a new challenge. In addition, we have moved into completely new territory for ICA: In ICA Health, we have a robot that was developed for targeted and efficient disinfection in hospitals. Offering solutions in medical technology is particularly satisfying in the current pandemic period, as we feel we are also doing our part to improve the situation.

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CI Note Line CI 11-10 Recycler