



A DAM-EDV Picture is Worth 1,000 Woods A Logging App for Smartphones

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"Say 'Cheese!'" If you are on a walk in the forest and see a truck driver taking pictures of the logs loaded on his truck with his smartphone, don't be alarmed. This man probably does not have an overly affectionate relationship with his load. Rather, his snapshots serve a very tangible economic purpose.

Together with pilot customer Leobner Realgemeinschaft, one of the largest logging companies in Austria, BASIS customer DAM-EDV has developed a smartphone delivery note app for drivers to use whenever they transport a load of logs from the forest to a sawmill. Let's take a look at what this process looked like before, and how the new app works.

Before: A Slow and Error-prone Process

Previously, the driver estimated the quality and quantity of the wood and manually filled in a delivery note on paper, which he handed in with his load. At the sawmill, they weighed the wood and provided their own estimate of its quality. The measuring record taken at the sawmill is important for the logging company, because the quality of the wood defines the price the logging company receives. The price can fluctuate significantly, from 40 to 100 euros per solid cubic meter. The sawmill determines the final price and eventually credits that amount to the logging company.

It could take several days until the delivery note is entered – manually, again – into the database. The logging company would receive their money only after the wood was processed in the sawmill. And every so often, there would be conflicting opinions between the logging company and the sawmill as to the quality of the wood. But what if the logging company was convinced that the wood they had delivered was worth more than they were credited by the sawmill? How could they prove the quality after all the logs had been turned into boards?

Now: More Convenience and a Quicker Turnover

DAM-EDV's BUI app has profoundly changed this entire paperwork-heavy process. Instead of filling in a delivery note by hand, the truck driver simply types the data into his smartphone on an app running on a cloud server. The intuitive entry screen shown in **Figure 1** makes it simple for him.



Figure 1. The entry screen on the smartphone

Then he takes a couple of pictures of his cargo with his smartphone's built-in camera (**Figure 2**). The image quality with modern phones is very good – Apple, Samsung, and Sony have all performed well in tests – and the app can process up to seven photos. So when in doubt, validating the quality of the delivered wood with a photo helps to substantiate the grade the logging company claimed. Videos are possible as well, of course. “A 60-second video will be a 5 MB file that takes only about 20 seconds to transmit,” explains Werner Dam, Managing Director of DAM-EDV.



Figure 2. Driver capturing his cargo for transport using his smartphone

With a simple tap of his finger on the 'send' button, the driver transmits the delivery note, including pictures and video, via email to the server at DAM-EDV. There, the email is forwarded automatically to the freight company and the logging company. At the same time, the digitized delivery note is stored in the logging company's database.

The simplified process has advantages for everyone.

- The driver can more easily forward his data
- The logging company
 - Eliminates the time required to enter the data into their database
 - Receives credit on their account for the delivery much sooner
 - Can better estimate their financial turnover knowing at any given time how many trucks are underway with logs, and in what quality and quantity

Of course, this process greatly simplifies resource and financial planning. “Our partner's largest customer delivers up to 200 truck loads a day, which means that, beforehand, about 600 truck loads were underway without being accounted for. Now, at any given time he has the data he needs to plan his financial turnover and the deployment of his resources,” Dam explains. “The forestry enterprise benefits from the tracking of the driver's movements as well.”

Project Duration: Only Two Weeks

“We completed the web-based solution with BBJ® in about 80 man-hours over the span of about 3 months,” Dam estimates. “And the app was our first BBJ project!”

The pilot customer was involved with the project team the whole time, testing new program versions in practical tests and giving valuable feedback to make a very stable and functional application. The user interface is pretty basic for the time being because, as it is the first release, it was all about stable function. For the next release though, DAM-EDV will visually enhance the application with CSS (cascading style sheets) to improve the user interface and make it even more user friendly.

“We already have a number of other prospects, but it was important to me to have an application that really runs smoothly, before we offer it to other customers,” says Dam.

The developers at DAM-EDV profit directly from their experience with the BBJ BUI app since the company is planning to migrate their 10+ application packages, which are currently running in Visual PRO/5®, to BBJ.

Everyone has a Smartphone – the Hardware is Practically Free

Thanks to BUI, the app works flawlessly on any current smartphone, which virtually everyone nowadays owns. “BUI makes the modern smartphone technology available with just the ‘tap’ of a finger. For instance, we don’t need to learn an extra programming language for native apps for each smartphone manufacturer. We can also foresee adding other functions that the hardware offers. For example, we could save the GPS code along with every photo taken, so that the truck driver could prove where he picked up his cargo,” says Dam. “If a customer demands it, we’ll make that available on the spot.”

But the most important thing is the fact that the hardware comes practically for free. “Our competitors have similar solutions in the market, but they all require buying tablets and extra software.” With DAM-EDV, the app is seamlessly included in their application package ‘Rundholzanwendung’ (log application) as an optional module, and the logging company doesn’t need to invest in any hardware. Every driver can use his own device, with which he is already familiar. Training expenses are minimized to “two minutes,” as Dam reports. “Needless to say, our customers liked this aspect very much.” And with any changes in staff, there is also no extra retraining effort. The new driver receives the URL and his credentials for the app, and begins to work productively with his own smartphone almost immediately.

Easier With Assistance From BASIS

Throughout the project, DAM-EDV was in contact with the BASIS Europe team. For example, when they discovered an issue with using the iPhone's numeric keyboard, the Saarbruecken team immediately forwarded it to the development team at BASIS USA who quickly resolved the issue and released the fix in the next BBj distribution.

In addition, Andreas Timm was available for face-to-face training and for answering detailed questions remotely. Dam thinks it is a good idea to commission detail projects to BASIS Europe, when it makes sense. *"For example, BASIS Professional Services designed the module for uploading the pictures and videos from the smartphone to the server. We could have done this ourselves because the tools are very well documented. However, an experienced programmer from BASIS delivered that in a couple of hours, saving us a couple of days' work that we could use more effectively for our customers."*

Summary

DAM-EDV of Austria, together with their pilot customer Leobner Realgemeinschaft, have developed an app for the lumber industry, dramatically streamlining the data flow of the delivery of wood to sawmills and making the process more efficient for all. Following the success of this app, there is already a huge interest from other players in the very large lumber industry business in Austria.

Werner Dam is also thinking about another version of the BUI app for other customer industries. *"For instance, building material wholesalers come to mind, who could achieve efficiency gains with mobile applications as well. Taking our growing experience into account, developing such a new app would be a piece of cake for us."* ■



DAM-EDV Ges.m.b.H. in Styria, Austria, was founded in 1988. Werner Dam has been the company's managing director since inception. Today, the company serves 110+ customers from various industries such as lumber, sawmills, sand, gravel, and logistics in Austria and neighboring countries.

Customers can choose from a broad portfolio consisting of standard solutions for accounting, cost accounting, asset accounting, and human resources, which they can combine with industry-specific applications to form their own individual IT system. All DAM-EDV customers subscribe to BASIS' Software Asset Management. www.damedv.at



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