

CASE STUDIES

HID Global Helps Streamline Bhutan’s Driver License Issuance and Management System



Road Safety and Transport Authority, Thimphu, Bhutan

The Road Safety and Transport Authority of Bhutan (RSTA), the government agency responsible for printing and issuing driver’s licenses sought a more secure and durable card issuance solution for the country’s growing population of road users. Formerly known as Surface and Transport Authority (STA), the agency was established in 1977 and works to provide safe, reliable and cost-effective transportation alternatives that support the socio-economic development of Bhutan. Among its myriad of private and commercial motor vehicle functions, it is responsible for all vehicle registration and driver license issuance throughout the country. The RSTA currently employs approximately 170 civil servants in its regional and local offices across the country.

Challenges

In recent years, Bhutan has undergone significant economic development and modernization leading to an increase in a number of drivers unable to manage the high demand in the issuance of driver’s licenses, the existing printing process was inefficient and lacked a streamlined approach for replacing printer consumables needed in order to meet the demands of new driver requirements. Dependent on a system that required different vendors for its consumables such as cards and overlaminates, the RSTA needed a more efficient printing solution from a single source that would enable them to issue a high-volume of ID cards.

“We needed a more efficient printing solution without compromising security, durability and image quality,” said Tshering Nidup, ICT Officer at the Road Safety and Transport Authority. “Before implementing HID Global’s ID card issuance solution, we had to work with multiple vendors to get all the components needed in order to carry out the printing of driver’s licenses, but there were times when it was difficult to ensure each vendor would deliver the needed consumable on time. If any of them had to delay their delivery to a particular site, we had to stop printing at that location creating a large backlog for us.”

Since the driver’s licenses are also used as citizen identification, it is critical for the ID card to be highly secure, resistant to cloning and counterfeiting. Previously, the licenses lacked the security features that prevented them from being tampered with resulting in an underground market of fake IDs that presented a problem for law enforcement.

In addition, the old licenses were very susceptible to wear and tear fading after a few years, leaving behind IDs with only faint images of personal information that were illegible, and difficult to be recognized.

“The printers were plugged in and they were just ready to go. They were also incredibly intuitive to use, and we have had no problem with them through the entire year.” ”

Tshering Nidup
 ICT Officer
 Road Safety and Transport
 Authority of Bhutan (RSTA)



Thinley Dorji, Motor Vehicle Inspector at RSTA, is one of the officers responsible for the issuance of drivers' licenses in Bhutan.

Solutions

After RSTA selected Ugen Trading House (UTH), the local authorized dealer of HID Global solutions in Bhutan, the RSTA selected HID Global's FARGO® HDP5000 high definition printers/encoders and deployed the new system in its offices last year to manage the driver's license issuance process. The RSTA chose HID Global because it was looking for a trusted partner who could provide not only highly secure products that adhere to international standards, but also professional and thorough aftersales services and support.

The HDP5000 printers/encoders enabled RSTA to gain access to state-of-the-art, high-definition and efficient card printing at a lower total cost of ownership than the previously deployed solution.

"Gaining greater efficiency with the new printers, we had no problems operating and issuing ID cards across all of our driver's license distribution locations," said Nidup.

Additionally, the HDP5000 ID printer and encoder produces crisp, high-definition images by leveraging the retransfer print technology. By printing a reverse image on an intermediate film, then transferring the film to the card surface, the HDP5000 outputs greater image quality that is long-lasting and more resistant to wear and tear compared to those printed directly on the cards.

The new driver's licenses also features a multitude of security features, supported by the HDP5000 printers. The RTSA achieved this by utilizing the dual-sided printing feature. By installing the dual lamination module it enabled them to quickly and efficiently laminate the cards on both sides, without flipping, in one pass.

Benefits

For easy identification, the new driver's licenses are issued in three different colors – white for private cars, blue for commercial vehicles such as buses, and green for taxis. The improved quality of the cards have received positive feedback by the citizens of Bhutan, as it provides a more secure, durable and updated look. "We now have a lot fewer requests for replacement cards compared to last year lessening our work load and resulting in an added benefit in annual waste savings," added Nidup.

With the new HID Global solution deployed, the RSTA of Bhutan can now procure all printer consumables from a single source for a more efficient and streamlined resupplying process. The high throughput rate of the HDP5000 printers also contributes to improved efficiency. In the first few weeks of deployment, the RSTA cleared its backlog of driver's licenses requests. As a result, the department also reduced its wait times for the issuance of new and replacement licenses.

Law enforcement agencies also benefit from the change to the printing process. In the months since the new IDs were issued, law enforcement officers have observed a decline in incidents involving fake IDs. The new security features on the IDs prove to be an effective deterrence against counterfeiting. Those counterfeit driver's licenses circulating in the market can easily be distinguished from the genuine ones. The inability to create a counterfeit of the new IDs has resulted in a drop in the production of inauthentic IDs.

"We are very pleased with the deployment of the HDP5000 printers and are currently exploring how we can expand our use of technology. Smart chip encoding, which can be supported by the printers with an upgrade, would enable us to augment the cards and make them multifunctional, and is a feature we are interested in implementing in the near future," said Nidup.

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