

Overview

Name: Dr. Ing. Konrad Haller

Company: EDV - Dr. Haller & Co. GmbH

Location: Plauen - Germany

Industry: Traffic engineering software and services

Product: CorelDRAW® Graphics Suite



Signpost next to the Brandenburger Tor

All Roads Lead to Plauen

With more than 20 million traffic signs comprising 650 different instructions, traffic on Germany's highways and streets usually flows pretty smoothly. But setting up and monitoring this forest of signs is a huge challenge for the country's town planners and highways departments. Added to that are changes that need to be made quickly to divert traffic around roadworks and other temporary blockages. So it's no wonder that there was a huge opportunity here for the company, Dr. Haller & Co., with its traffic-related software based on CorelDRAW. In fact, Dr. Haller is the market leader today.

"Things really started moving in 1995," remembers Konrad Haller, the company's CEO, a mathematician with a doctorate in IT. "That was when the government introduced its new guidelines for securing roadworks on city streets and highways." The idea behind the regulations was to keep traffic moving around the roadworks and to increase the safety of both motorists and construction workers. With typical German precision, the rules defined the exact type of roadblocks, lights and markings to be used, as well as the minimum distance

between the traffic and the roadworks. There was even a congress to present the extensive new rules to all concerned. "We were there," notes Haller, "because my son – who was still a student at the time – had developed a piece of software based on CorelDRAW 4 that enabled town and highway planners to automate their roadwork plans on the computer." With a glow of pride, he adds: "There were about 300 companies there, all involved in safety for roadworks sites – and they pounced on the product like there was no tomorrow. It just flew off the shelves – and we suddenly realised we were on to a winner." Today, the company has over 25 staff, and along with its roadwork planning product, it provides software modules to design traffic signs and road markings. The company now works with the latest version of CorelDRAW Graphics Suite.

Road signs for Europe and Dubai

Konrad Haller already had a few ingenious inventions to his name – some highly specialized applications developed with CorelDRAW. "One of these was designed to optimize musical instruments for a better sound. In 2000, we even won an award for a CorelDRAW-based program to optimize the curvature of a violin body," he recalls. But over the years he had more highway departments, town planners and engineering consultancies among his customers than violin manufacturers. "Today, there are about 20 companies making traffic signs in Germany – and they're all customers of ours." His name is beginning to travel further afield too, with orders coming in from sign makers in Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia and Greece. The company even has enquiries from Dubai about designing traffic signs.

Although Dr. Haller's typical customer, core business and team have changed over the years, one thing has stayed constant: Corel software. Why? He finds it's easy to adapt and extend – and those are two key benefits for him.



Manufacturing of a traffic sign on a special printing machine



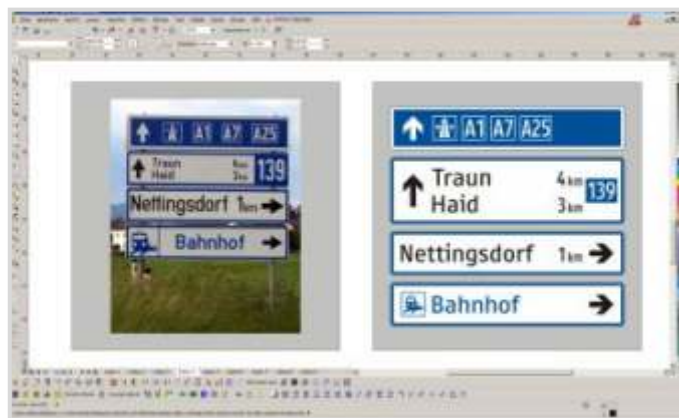
Computer-aided draft of a land-use plan for road signage in Dubai

"Using CorelDRAW's application controllers, we've always been able to develop special functions and tailor solutions to customers' exact needs," he says. The firm's already done that for well over 3,500 users in Germany alone. Dr. Haller is especially proud of the feature that he and his team integrated into CorelDRAW two years ago, which has been available ever since. "When users position their cursor over an object, they see a choice of functions, like turn, straighten etc.. It helps them get their work done five times faster!"



Screenshot of a map displaying traffic markings. It shows a crossing in Sachsen-Anhalt

The speed advantage was really useful for one special event – the football World Cup, which was held in Germany in 2006. "In the space of just one month, we had to design all the new signposts for the Stuttgart stadium, which had been renamed, then send the designs to the sign makers for immediate manufacture." And they had to be made exactly in accordance with



Following the existing guidelines, new signposts have been drafted for signposts in Austria

FIFA regulations, too. They managed it thanks to the efficiency of CorelDRAW. Besides the speed, he sees another advantage in the product's price point compared to competitive products – as well as the fact that it's really easy to learn and is compatible with Windows applications.

Constant dialogue with customers

But Dr. Haller's not resting on his laurels – and the future's looking very promising. "There's been a very powerful printing machine on the market for the last couple of years that can print large traffic signs in one go on a highly reflective foil – it prints directly onto the prism film," says Dr. Haller. "We were asked to design the controls for this very innovative – and very expensive – new machine. This included things like color management, contour mapping, labeling the different parts – and we did everything with CorelDRAW X5". One thing that he was really pleased about was that he could test the software solution directly on the machine. After all, Dr. Haller's always been convinced that constant dialogue with customers is the only way to produce a software solution that one 100 per cent meets their needs.



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