As the product portfolio of Stockholm, Sweden-based Ericsson AB continues to grow and diversify, so too does the volume of support documentation for customers. So much so that in 1994 alone, the company printed and distributed 31 million sheets of paper, an amount equal to a pile 10 times the height of the Eiffel Tower. Needless to say, proper management of all these documents is essential to Ericsson’s success.

**Streamlining the Document Process**

Ericsson AB is a company that understands the value of timely and precise communication. After all, it’s involved with virtually every aspect of telecommunications, including the design, manufacturing and marketing of systems and products for processing voice, data, image and text through public and private networks.

Ericsson Ltd., located in Scunthorpe, England, is the United Kingdom subsidiary. Besides being responsible for manufacturing equipment for public telephone exchanges and mobile phone systems, the Scunthorpe
location has worked itself into being an important hub for critical customer documentation.

The constant evolution and expansion of Ericsson’s products and services, and their installation across a large number of sites, have posed some very complex document management problems for the company. The specification, assembly and reproduction of customized document packs, known as Customer Libraries, used to be a very tedious and expensive process for Ericsson.

**The Long Way Around**

Most of Ericsson’s documents are text-based operations and maintenance manuals. Approximately five percent of the required documents are large-format, CAD-based drawings. Ericsson must specify the documents that go into every Customer Library for each installation site, and then print, check and deliver the completed Customer Library documents fast enough to keep pace with the factory output.

Customer orders go through the Sales and Marketing Department to the Library Service team. Working from the order, all the documents needed for a customer library are listed, and a master copy is prepared by printing a copy of every sheet needed and assembling the documents into a binder.

Using each master library as a prototype, the requisite number of copies are produced and distributed. In the past, the Library Service team would request the document they needed from Ericsson’s headquarters in Sweden. The requested documents would then be assembled and transported to Scunthorpe for reproduction.

An order could be as large as 800 documents. If any masters were discovered missing, it could add several weeks to the date of delivery.

“Our Library Service team used to request hard copy masters of text and graphical documents from the worldwide repository in Stockholm and it would take up to six weeks to get what we needed,” says Malcolm Brader, Docuware Manager, Ericsson Ltd.

“And the problem wasn’t just time… as document volumes increased, the process of shipping hard copy from headquarters became very expensive due to high shipping and storage costs. Our outsourcing partnership with Xerox Business Services has enabled us to improve the process significantly.”
The Right Connection

Xerox Business Services has been on-site with The Document Source since 1992, providing document services to Ericsson Ltd. The Document Source is a strategic outsourcing solution that provides client companies access to the most comprehensive range of document services and solutions available today.

Document consultants at XBS began to address Ericsson’s customer documentation problem with a Document Lifecycle Management™ solution. The first step was installing and managing two Xerox 4090 Laser Printers. This enabled the master documents for each Customer Library to be retrieved electronically via a high-speed data link to the central IBM mainframe repository in Stockholm.

XBS also added a Xerox wide-format engineering printer on-site at the Document Source facility to handle the larger-format, graphics-based drawings. Soon after, Ericsson agreed that a better solution would be to add Xerox Virtual Printroom (XVP) software to the technology mix.

XVP is an engineering document management system that allows the user to scan, store, access, manage, distribute and print wide-format engineering documents. Designed as a multi-user system, XVP software gives entire organizations access to mission-critical information on a worldwide basis.

Most of the output from XVP has been large format, but high resolutions on Xerox printers have allowed XBS to provide many of the larger drawings in smaller sizes, which are much easier to handle and include in binders. With XVP operational, the current XBS solution now permits Ericsson’s Library Service team to build a master library by ordering single prints of the text documents.

“Outsourcing partnership with Xerox Business Services has enabled us to improve the process significantly.”

WORLDWIDE INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS
These are sent electronically from Sweden over the data link and printed on the Xerox 4090s via a local interface. Most of the larger-format documents, usually multi-sheet drawings, are now conveniently stored in Scunthorpe on the XVP system. A hard copy drawing that resides in Sweden can now be scanned and transported electronically, where it will be stored for future use.

During the first 21 months of operation, the number of drawings stored in Scunthorpe has reached about 80,000. With all the drawings for a Customer Library stored on XVP, the sets for printing are specified and printed on the Xerox 8840 Engineering Printer or a remote, smaller-format Xerox 8812.

The Document Source Centralized Document Production Group, working from the masters provided from XVP, produce the required copies by a variety of methods, including the use of Xerox DocuTech Production Publishers. Repetitive work, such as long documents that must be reproduced frequently, will have been scanned and stored within the DocuTechs, so copies can be made easily each time they are required.

The group also has direct access to XVP to order runs of large-format drawings. Most of the equipment is in constant use in order to meet the tight production schedules.

Making Time, Saving Money

With the XVP fully integrated into the work process for printing masters and copies of Ericsson’s Customer Libraries, the benefits have been wide ranging. The documentation packs, a vital part of Ericsson’s product, are now produced in three weeks, instead of the 10 weeks previously required.