

# REFERENCE STORY

THE READSOFT EFFECT ON:  
THE CITY OF VÄSTERÅS

SOLUTION: SURVEY PROCESSING

INDUSTRY: GOVERNMENT

COUNTRY: SWEDEN

## A 98-percent saving

The City of Västerås processes forms with staggering speed

*The Department of Surveys and Statistics at Västerås Stad (The City of Västerås), frequently carries out surveys for different departments within the city. The survey forms are sent by post to a selection of the city's population in order to find out what people think about the services the city provides. This means thousands of envelopes to open and forms to read, not to mention the overwhelming amount of data to key into computers for further processing. Or at least this was the case before Västerås Stad found a way to make their computers take care of the registration with staggering speed.*

### More coffee please

"Nowadays we just throw a pile of 1000 forms in the scanner, press start and head for the coffee machine", says Fredrik Alm at Västerås Stad with a smile. "Seriously though, we'll have to take that coffee break another time since there are plenty of other, more qualitative, things to do now that ReadSoft has taken over the boring and time-consuming registration of forms.

Different departments within Västerås Stad order surveys and evaluations of their services. A few years ago, all forms were registered manually and staff spent months reading and compiling results. The City of Västerås set out to find a way to automate this tedious job. The choice fell on ReadSoft's software FORMS, which uses technology that reads and recognizes both handwriting and machine print. This choice turned out to be a very successful one indeed.

### 53 times as fast

"The time savings are enormous," says Fredrik Alm. "Previously we could process 75 forms per hour; nowadays we do 4000 forms per hour. That's 53 times as fast! The processing cost has decreased from 7,3 SEK to 0,1 SEK per form which means that we have lowered the city's forms handling costs by a staggering 98 percent. It is almost hard to believe the numbers, but they do add up."

The increase in efficiency means that Västerås Stad now can carry out more surveys than before, at a lower cost. They



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can also focus on projects which they did not have time for previously.

Volumes are steadily increasing as well. This year, the number of survey forms will be well over 20,000 and just recently, a survey was sent to 15,000 students and parents in the city. 11 500 replies were returned, but the processing only took a couple of days. All results were compiled within a month. When Västerås Stad did this survey a few years ago, the findings were not presented until a whole year later.

### Increased quality

"I don't have an exact figure of what our savings are when it comes to money, but I know that the savings are substantial. Moreover, the quality of the entered data is better since human errors are reduced to an absolute minimum. It is also important to remember that this means better working conditions for our staff since we have removed a lot of boring and monotonous tasks. On the whole, ReadSoft has made a big difference for us and I can highly recommend the technology to other municipal organizations" finishes Fredrik Alm.

### Facts:

- The Fujitsu production scanner reads approximately one form per second.
- The scanner reads both pages of a double-sided form at the same time.
- The scanner can be fed batches of 1000 forms.
- 4200 forms can be read per hour.