Case Study

Spirit’s solution enhances efficiency at JBT Distribution

Applications such as electronic proof of delivery and collection have become a vital weapon in the armoury of warehouse and distribution companies. A well-managed mobile computing solution that can provide these capabilities, along with other related facilities, can help to transform performance, productivity and efficiency. When JBT Distribution Limited sourced a versatile solution from Spirit Data Capture Limited (including Zebra MC65 mobile computers and a management portal), it was soon enjoying benefits such as increased efficiency and cost savings.
JBT Distribution Limited is Scotland’s leading road haulage operator. It was formed in 1993, and now has a total of 330 employees, 70 vehicles and 140 trailers. The company has warehousing and distribution depots strategically located across Scotland – in Aberdeen, Inverness, Kirkwall, Lerwick, East Kilbride and Bathgate. It also provides haulage to and from the Orkney and Shetland Islands and throughout the UK via the PalletFORCE network (of which it is a shareholder member).

The firm recently started looking for a robust IT solution for parcel delivery and tracking. It wanted to streamline its current manual warehouse systems, electronic proof-of-delivery and proof-of-collection systems, and third-party courier processes. The new solution was also needed to manage KPI (Key Performance Indicator) data and for producing reports for customers. In addition, the company wanted to have live tracking of its flexible and varied vehicle fleet that serves Scotland and beyond.

Michael Beveridge, JBT’s Director, explains: “We were previously using our clients’ own systems or paper-based systems. We needed a new solution that would be reliable, accurate and rugged and would provide tracking and communications facilities such as GPS and 3G.”

An ideal solution
JBT approached Spirit Data Capture Limited about possible solutions, having researched different options extensively. Spirit recommended the Zebra MC65, a rugged mobile computer using a Windows Mobile 6.5 Professional operating system. This device is ideally suited to warehousing and distribution environments and boasts a comprehensive range of features, including a 3.5” display, a camera, a 2D imager, an IP64 rating, 3.5G, Bluetooth and GPS.

The application package provided by Spirit includes vehicle safety checks; RID and sort; van loading; proof of delivery / collection; depot collection; barcode printing; and feature-rich reporting. JBT also took Spirit’s Gold Managed Service, which provides first-line support, as well as Soti’s MobiControl mobile device management solution. The latter helps to ensure that the company’s mobile devices provide significant improvements in efficiency, customer service and future cost savings.

In addition, Spirit provided a web-based management portal and a customer-facing portal. The system imports and exports job data via third-party courier systems. The parcel data are uploaded, the scan events are recorded and customer reports are created.

The new solution has led to a reduction in paperwork, fewer manual errors (due to automation), and less time needed to complete jobs. There is less human input and the solution has improved response and performance times. The processes are more eco-friendly, with greater visibility and improved Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for JBT’s third-party distributors, along with faster invoicing times.

“It is crucial in parcel delivery,” says Michael. “It’s impossible to function without the system. Now that it has been developed, it has become popular with the users. Spirit have been very friendly and professional throughout. They always offer solutions rather than problems. We will continue with them in the future as they have become a key business partner and we have already travelled a long way together.”