



## Spirit transforms Coinadrink's stock control

Stock control is one of the many areas where handheld data capture devices can make a real difference to the efficiency of a company's operations. However, as the devices are likely to be in frequent use, they need to be rugged and reliable. This is why vending machine supplier, Coinadrink, decided to source new handheld units for its activities. It opted for Datalogic Elf PDAs, supplied and supported by Spirit Data Capture Limited. The new devices are already proving to be powerful, rugged and reliable.

Established in 1962, Coinadriak offers a complete vending service to its customers. The company has built a reputation for its consistent, high quality service and was the first UK vending machine company to gain the 'Investors in People' award. Coinadriak sells a wide variety of vending and table-top machines that dispense hot and cold drinks, food and snacks – as well as a range of water coolers.

The company recently decided to upgrade the handheld devices it was using to help with stock control. Coinadriak's IT and e-Commerce Assistant, Matt Dodd, explains: "Our existing devices were three or four years old and were always breaking down. We therefore decided to replace them with a more rugged and reliable product.

"We were looking for units with a longer battery life; a 3G capability; WiFi; 2D imaging; standardised USB connectivity; and compatibility with our MCL software. We also wanted a solution that would include a support and maintenance contract, with a fast turnaround on any repairs."

#### **Elf to the rescue!**

The company searched for handheld scanners on Google and came across Spirit Data Capture Limited. Coinadriak recognized the name, as it had trialed a device provided by Spirit several years previously. Matt says: "We initiated a web chat with Spirit's Sales team. After looking at all of our requirements, Spirit recommended the Datalogic Elf."

The Elf is a rugged PDA, developed by Datalogic primarily for retail and field force applications. It is very rugged and feature-rich and incorporates a 1D laser scanner, a 2D barcode imager and a camera. It has a Windows Embedded Handheld 6.5 operating system; four different wireless technologies (including GPS and Bluetooth); and USB connectivity.

Matt continues: "The Datalogic Elf met all of our criteria. We particularly liked the device's ruggedness, ease of use and the

USB micro port." Coinadriak is now using the devices in several ways. The main application involves servicing the vending machines. The company's vending operators travel around the country, restocking the equipment. They use the Elfs to scan products in and out of the machines and to take cash and meter readings. They also collect orders from the stores and complete monthly van stock takes.

Coinadriak's stores have a similar programme for receiving and issuing stock, and for monthly stock takes. The delivery drivers use the Datalogic units for proof of delivery and for checking the installation, servicing and removal of water coolers. The company has recently started using the Elfs internally, to catalogue its current stock of vending machines.

"So far," adds Matt, "the new devices have been a vast improvement on the previous ones. They have a better battery life, they're more reliable, and they transmit data at a faster speed back to the site. Their greater functionality should give us more scope to improve and expand our current projects.

#### **Help when needed**

"I've been involved in this project from the very start and have been extremely impressed with all aspects of Spirit's responses, from the initial contact with Sales through to technical support. I always receive a prompt reply either by phone or email (sometimes both) to any query.

"Spirit have offered to help with the support of our previous devices, as they have existing service contracts. They've also introduced us to MobiControl device management software, which might be a useful option that we could explore further in the future. Finally, they've liaised with MCL about a specific issue relating to hand triggers, which led to a software patch being sent from MCL to rectify the situation. We look forward to developing a long and mutually beneficial relationship with them."



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