

# Spirit uses Zebra devices to open a new window of opportunity for IG Doors



The speed and accuracy of operations at different stages of the supply chain are particularly important to manufacturers – and the development of new premises can be an ideal time for exploring the use of mobile enterprise solutions, including data capture and analysis. IG Doors is opening a new factory in South Wales and approached Spirit Data Capture, the independent mobile enterprise specialist, for possible solutions. Spirit recommended ultra-rugged Zebra scanners and printers and these have already helped to streamline the company's operations.

IG Doors was formed 35 years ago and is based in Cwmbran, South Wales. It's the UK market leader in the development and supply of high-performance doors to the new build and social housing refurbishment sectors. The company puts a strong emphasis on a close working relationship with its clients, including an in-depth understanding of their needs combined with outstanding delivery and service performance.

In 2017, IG Doors is opening an impressive new 20,000m<sup>2</sup> purpose-built factory on a 25 acre site, incorporating an advanced manufacturing facility. The company wanted to implement a range of new mobile enterprise solutions for use in the factory, including handheld barcode scanners and mobile printers.

## Defining the issue

James Toyer, SAP Team End User in the company's SAP Support / Purchasing and Materials Department, explains: "We needed some barcode scanners that would fit onto a forklift truck; and rugged handheld scanners that could handle harsh environments. These also needed to be waterproof as they might have to be used outside, in conditions of light rain.

"We were also looking for small and cost-effective IP printers that could print 6" x 4" labels. In addition, we needed some long-range scanners that could scan EAN-128 and QR barcodes. We use these on our warehouse racks, as the QR codes don't take up as much room on the labels."

## Developing the solution

When IG Doors started to explore possible solutions, it carried out a Google search for independent specialists – and Spirit Data Capture came out as the top result. IG Doors therefore contacted Spirit,

who discussed the company's needs and then developed some recommendations.

Spirit suggested Zebra MC92s as the rugged handheld scanners for use in harsh conditions. These are mobile computers that provide best-in-class barcode scanning and can run applications with highly intuitive interfaces to boost productivity. The MC92 includes a range of six scan engines and interchangeable keypads.

"We were happy with these," says James, "as we'd used the Zebra MC90 range before. The MC92s will be used in the new factory for smaller products – for instance, when transferring tins of paint from the goods receipt zone to the paint store."

For the forklift trucks – and for fixing to some large trolleys – Spirit chose Zebra VC70 and DS3608 scanners. The ultra-rugged VC70 is a tablet that has been built to handle the demands of extreme warehouse environments. It has an IP66 rating, robust connectivity options and a large, high-resolution display. It can be mounted onto virtually any warehouse vehicle. James comments: "Spirit provided a sample of the VC70 and we were very impressed with how tough it was – which is why we decided to purchase them."

The DS3608 is an ultra-rugged corded barcode scanner that's described by Zebra as being 'practically indestructible'. It has an IP65 rating and, like the MC92, has a long scanning range.

Spirit also recommended Zebra GK420D mobile printers. These are direct thermal label printers that will print labels up to 4.09" wide. "We'd had previous experience with these printers," says James, "and we'd found them to be very reliable and cost-effective. The Zebra printers will be used in our Goods Receipt office for printing 6" x 4" storage unit labels that identify IG Doors' products with EAN-128 barcodes."

## Reaping the rewards

Jay comments: "So far, the different devices have been performing well. We particularly like the high level of accuracy they provide, which means that there shouldn't be any incorrect transfers to the production supply areas. The handheld devices are still very new to most of our employees but they are very impressed with how easy it is to transfer materials using barcodes. The operators need to make fewer visual checks to identify and transfer products around the warehouses and Persistent Staging Areas."

He continues: "We've had tremendous customer support from Danielle at Spirit throughout. Her service has been impeccable – from the initial quote, through to advice on the products we selected, to the actual delivery. We've also had fantastic support from Tomasz in the Technical team, who helped us with a related software issue. Overall, Spirit offers a very good service and we'll be purchasing many more devices from them in the future once the new factory is fully operational."

