

WILKINSON PLACES £1.4M ORDER PICKING CONTRACT AFTER PSION TEKLOGIX DEMONSTRATES "COMPELLING RETURN ON INVESTMENT"

Retail giant Wilkinson has placed an order worth over £1.4 million with Psion Teklogix (UK) Ltd for a new order picking solution using voice technology. The system is set to go live at Wilkinson's two main distribution hubs – at Magor, South Wales, and Manton Wood, Worksop, in readiness for the Christmas rush.

The two logistics centres, which between them provide Wilkinson with in excess of 2.3 million square feet of storage space, store more than 25,000 live sku's at any one time. Goods arrive at the facilities from global suppliers and are held before onward delivery to Wilkinson's 283 stores.

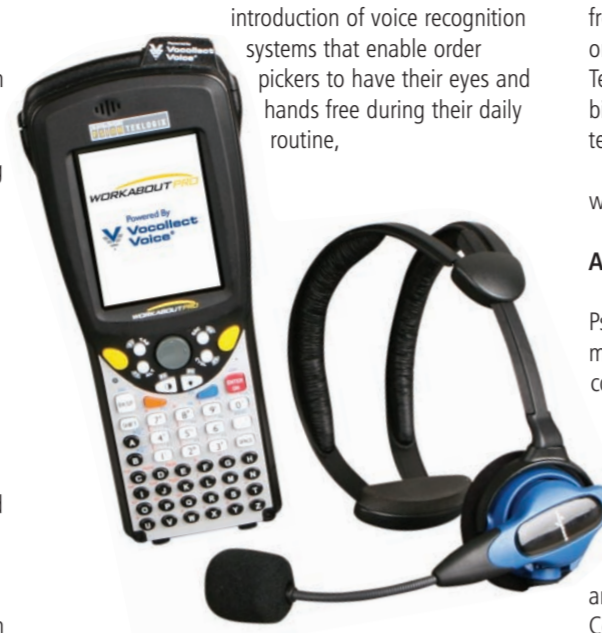
Psion Teklogix TekSpeech speech recognition solution - an end-to-end solution that provides speech-directed interaction between the mobile worker and the host system – was chosen as the interface with Wilkinson's existing AS400 and the company's warehouse management system which was developed in-house. As part of the contract, Psion Teklogix will equip some 630 order picking staff with WORKABOUT PRO Speech hand-held data collection terminals. Psion's WORKABOUT PRO Speech units

enable users to pick and put-away by voice and scan or image a barcode or, if required – either immediately or at some point in the future – read an RFID transponder.

The new technology will replace Wilkinson's existing paper-based system and is expected to deliver a return on investment (ROI) within 10 months based purely on forecast increases in productivity alone. Anticipated gains in stock control and order picking accuracy are expected to shorten the ROI time still further.

Simon Lowe, Wilkinson's head of supply chain, commented: "Psion Teklogix was able to demonstrate such a compelling return on investment, that there was no reason not to proceed with adoption of the system immediately."

Duncan Smillie, managing director of Psion Teklogix (UK) Ltd, said: "We are delighted to be working with Wilkinson on this prestigious project. Psion Teklogix has worked with Wilkinson for over a decade and the company has always been technologically innovative. Wilkinson have realised that the



can have a dramatic impact on productivity levels within the warehouse.

"The shift towards greater use of voice technology is probably one of the most significant events in the logistics industry at the moment and Wilkinson is one of the many diverse companies that will benefit

from the advantages that it brings. However, this order is the single biggest voice contract that Psion Teklogix has taken globally and, I suspect, the biggest voice installation on multi-functional terminals anywhere in the world."

www.psiointeklogix.co.uk

About Psion Teklogix

Psion Teklogix is a global provider of solutions for mobile computing and wireless data collection. The company's fully integrated mobile computing solutions include rugged hardware, secure wireless networks, robust software, professional services and exceptional support programs. With over three decades of industry experience, Psion Teklogix has customers in more than 80 countries around the world, and over 36 sales and support offices in 17 countries.

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HEIGHT RESTRICTION

Over the years UKWA members have a good record of compliance with legislation

Primarily, forklift trucks are intended for lifting materials and not people. Historically though, they have been used in many warehousing and storage centre applications in conjunction with working platforms to allow staff to be elevated for a variety of reasons – from stocktaking to routine building maintenance.

However, some 18 months ago the Health and Safety Executive introduced new guidance that effectively outlaws working at height in a warehousing facility using forklift trucks and what is termed 'non-integrated' working platforms.

For those who don't know their 'integrated' from their 'non-integrated' platforms, it is probably worth explaining at this point that a non-integrated working platform is defined as an attachment for use in conjunction with a forklift truck to elevate people so they can work at height that has no controls in the platform to control the platform's lift height or move the truck. In other words, both truck and platform movements are controlled by the forklift operator at ground level. Integrated working platforms, meanwhile, are attachments with controls that are linked to and isolate the truck controls so that only a person in the platform can control the lift height of the platform and truck movements.

It is a matter of some concern that when drafting its PM 28 – Working Platform (non integrated) on Fork Lift Trucks guidance note, the Health and Safety Executive has sought to address a problem that doesn't actually exist and, in doing so, merely produced yet another another piece of legislation for legislation's sake. The United Kingdom Warehousing Association (UKWA) has written to the Health and Safety Executive seeking some evidence that working at height using nonintegrated platforms or cages is indeed more dangerous than using integrated products. So far, predictably perhaps, none has been forthcoming. In fact, the HSE tell us that, although there are no industry statistics, "anecdotal evidence" suggests nonintegrated platform-related injuries are on the increase. To that response, which appears tantamount to saying the new restriction is being placed on the industry because of the whim of the draftee, UKWA has carried out a survey of its membership (which comprises the leading third party logistics and warehousing companies), and the results are revealing.

Of over 100 companies that responded, none of them had ever had an injury as a result of using non integrated cages at height, and the vast majority of them (78%), continue to use that method to carry out stocktaking at height because it is impractical to use another mode. Bizarrely, PM 28 does allow 'occasional use' of non-integrated platforms for non-routine maintenance tasks such as the replacement of light fittings in high rise warehouses, checking on highlevel damage to racking suspected of causing an



Roger Williams, Chief Executive Officer of UKWA, believes the HSE has sought to address a problem that doesn't actually exist with its PM28 guidance note for working at height

immediate risk or assessing the condition of damaged roof lights, but only if these jobs are "not carried out as part of periodic maintenance operations."

However, the guidance note also states that: "Routine or planned tasks particularly associated with production or pre-planned activities such as periodic maintenance or stocktaking, are not exceptional circumstances and are thus not examples of occasional use."

So where does that leave warehouse operators? Over the years UKWA members have a good record of compliance with legislation, and I have little doubt that they will continue to be law abiding. However, rules seemingly made up on the hoof do not encourage compliance and UKWA will continue to press the HSE to alter this apparently pointless restriction, but I am not hopeful that we will be successful in the short term.

www.ukwa.org.uk

WAREHOUSE INDUSTRY NEWS

Sponsored by Proteus Software Ltd

TOO HOT TO HANDLE?

As I gaze out of my hotel balcony door I see a cloudless blue sky; although it is before 10am the sun is already a bright ball of fire beating down on the parched earth. It is only the cacti who seem content to endure these harsh and arid conditions. As I write this article I am attending a business conference in Phoenix, Arizona. Arriving late last night I missed the cool spell, only 36° C yesterday. Today is rather warmer at 40° C, and the temperature is predicted to rise to 41° later in the week. They often say, "if you cannot stand the heat get out of the kitchen." Today I am thinking, "if you cannot stand the heat then stay out of Arizona."

My situation has caused me to consider the question, "Where is the hottest place in business today". It seems to me that the warehouse is a fair contender, sandwiched right between the customers and the suppliers, with both exerting opposing pressures. On the customer side, we face demands for ever improving levels of service, faster fulfillment, better accuracy, and deliveries within very tight time windows. On the supply side there is an ever increasing reliance on imported products, or components, from half way around the world. Inevitably the result is longer production lead times and deliveries open to the vicissitudes inherent in a long range transport system; weather delays, port delays, customs delays.

So this leads us to our new saying for 21st century business, "If you cannot stand the heat, then get out of the warehouse." In terms of survival in the business environment today, we need to look to the cactus as a model. It has acquired the attributes necessary to sustain life in extremely harsh conditions. In the right conditions, longevity of life is one of the attributes of an oak tree, with many specimens having survived hundreds of years. The truth is that beautiful and imposing as they are, an oak will not survive very long in the desert. I make the proposition that in the business sense our 'green and pleasant land' has become an arid desert. If our businesses do not adapt to the new conditions they will not survive. We need to bring to our businesses the necessary attributes to prosper in the harsh environment of the 21st century.

There is no doubt that IT can play a major part in helping us survive the heat of the warehouse. You

may well think I am biased, and I am willing to acknowledge that I have an interest in this matter, but in my view many small and medium sized businesses and even some large ones, have not fully exploited the benefits available within modern systems. IT investment has been devoted to office automation, accounting, and production, with the warehouse being very much the Cinderella left without her dress for the ball. There is no need for a fairy godmother, the warehouse can justify the best clothes in its own right.

In assessing the various technology options available for the warehouse it is interesting to compare the hype of each with the reality. When a new technology emerges it is normally accompanied by much hype; magazine articles, conference presentations, media stories. It seems that everyone is talking about the topic, although in reality the actual usage is very low. Because the hype has overplayed the impact of the new technology, there often follows a trough of disillusionment when everyone realises that the hype has vastly inflated the reality. Eventually, we come to a balance where the hype and reality equalise, at which point that particular technology has become generally accepted in the marketplace.

Bar code scanning is so ubiquitous in the retail sector that we all take it for granted. When we purchase an item we present it to the cashier, and hardly notice the beep-beep as the bar code is scanned and the price is retrieved. Given that this well established and proven technology has been at the heart of retail business operations for around 30 years, it is surprising that its usage is not more widespread in the warehouse. Simple, proven, reliable, low cost, well accepted standards, and easy to use, it is a great starting place for anyone wanting to remove paper from their warehouse operation. It has been shown to improve accuracy and efficiency, and normally gives a rapid pay back on the necessary investment. This is definitely a mature technology, but still has a good deal of life left in it.

The application of voice terminals in the warehouse is a newer development, although the base technology has been around for a considerable period with, until recently, relatively low uptake. The speech terminal has a limited vocabulary with which it communicates with the warehouse personnel, giving instructions in voice form and accepting a response back in voice form. In the early days of speech recognition the strike rate was relatively low, but continual improvement has allowed the terminal to be easily trained to recognise the accent and speech pattern of each user, resulting in very high

hit rates. Moreover, recent advances have meant the cost of this technology has dropped significantly, and we are now seeing much more active interest and uptake. Voice technology is particularly useful where it is beneficial for the operative's hands to be free, and generally results in a productivity gain of around 10%-15% over bar code scanning for item picking. In my view we are just about at the point where the hype and reality match, and this is set to be a technology that has increasing adoption in the next few years.

A couple of years ago all we heard about was RFID this, RFID that, and we were certainly in a situation where the hype far exceeded the reality. Having been through the trough of disillusionment, we are starting to see some positive signs. For the last few years RFID has been in the "Catch 22" situation whereby if the cost of the tags were lower there would be more uptake and, if there were more uptake and consequently increased volumes being manufactured, the cost of the tags would fall. In the recent past there have been cost reductions, particularly for passive tags, and we are now starting to see signs of more widespread adoption of RFID technology. Of course, what will really drive the introduction of RFID are the demands of the multiple retailers. Once they insist that all items are tagged, RFID will have truly arrived. There is nothing wrong with the retailers being the driving force, for to realise the full benefits of RFID the tags must be used throughout the supply chain. If companies simply tag items to satisfy the demands of the retailers, but do not use them within their own business operation, they will be missing out on a huge benefit.

Finally, a brief word about the use of automated materials handling solutions. It is difficult to assess this equipment in a broad sense, as it encompasses such a wide spectrum, from a simple conveyor, through palletisers, carousels and sorters to full robotics.

Certainly the investment required for these types of solutions, has been, and is significant, and this has been an impediment to their deployment. The relatively high cost means that the investment has to be viewed over a longer time period in order to create a cost justification. Uncertainties as to future needs and requirements, particularly in the 3PL sector, where committed contract periods can be rather short, constrain the situations where this type of project can be financially justified. It is unfortunate that in many instances where some form of equipment has been acquired it is used stand alone. For example, we often see automatic storage and retrieval carousels installed

to optimise the use of the available floor space, yet these are not connected to the companies stock or warehouse systems. A large portion of the potential benefit is thereby lost. Much of the basic mechanics of automated material handling equipment has been in successful use for some time, with the most dramatic change in the recent past being in the electronics. As a consequence of these improvements, the ease of integration between the various materials handling equipment and the warehouse management system has improved dramatically. As advances continue to be made, the opportunities for businesses of all sizes to implement integrated systems will increase, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the overall solutions.

In the 21st century, the business cactus prospers by providing itself with the characteristics to survive the harshest of environments. The modern business should equip itself with those IT tools which will help it respond to the many and changing demands placed upon it. Improving accuracy, efficiency and timeliness are three key benefits that will be realised – you cannot survive as an oak tree in the desert.

Howard Turvey is Managing Director of Proteus Software, a company specialising in the development and implementation of warehouse management solutions.

www.proteussoftware.com



VISIT LOGISTICS LINK IN 2008 THE UK'S LEADING SUPPLY CHAIN EXHIBITION!

Logistics Link South takes place on 5th/6th February 2008 at Sandown Park, Esher, Surrey with an exhibitor list that reads like the "Who's Who" of the logistics world, making it the most impressive yet of any of the Logistics Link exhibitions. The exhibition covers all facets of the supply chain with over 100 market leaders exhibiting every product, system or service you could possibly need, whether you are running a warehouse, fleet of trucks or even a store room or van. Not only that, you can park your car at Sandown Park and be in the exhibition hall within 3 minutes without any of the hassle and costs associated with other venues.



Visitors for both Logistics Link South and Logistics Link Live! can pre-register to receive a fast track entry badge to avoid queuing on the day they visit the exhibition. All they have to do is visit www.logisticslink.co.uk to register and badges will be mailed to visitors two weeks before the show. Additional tickets can be obtained by telephoning the complimentary tickets hotline on 0870 744 498.

For further information about the Logistics Link series of exhibitions, contact Richard Milbourn on 020 7970 6237. Email richard.milbourn@centaur.co.uk or visit www.logisticslink.co.uk

proteus puzzle win a bottle of champagne!

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Sudoku for Fun

Fill in the blank squares with the numbers 1-9 so that every row, each column, and every 3x3 box contains all the numbers from 1-9 without duplicating any.

Once you have found all the numbers cut out the grid and send it along with your name and address details to:

Linda Rodway, Proteus Software Ltd, 1730 Solihull Parkway, Birmingham Business Park, Birmingham B37 7YD
www.proteussoftware.com

Skills for Logistics – Schools Focus Will Highlight Career Route

FTA and RHA and is guided by a steering group drawn from schools and employers.

Based on a pilot that took place in the North West, regional career brochures will be produced for the East Midlands and Scotland, launching during September. These feature case studies of people working within varied logistics roles whilst giving positive images of diversity as women, young men and people of all ethnic backgrounds need to be encouraged to consider these career options.

In addition, schools in the North West will be contributing to a project to develop curriculum materials using logistics as a context.

The programme will work with schools on a regional basis, initially for a period of three years, focusing on two key themes:

- raising awareness of the logistics sector with young people in schools by developing logistics related curriculum materials which will be taught in schools.
- highlighting the range of career opportunities within the logistics industries by producing logistics careers guides in both hard-copy and electronic formats.

The core aim of the programme is to raise awareness of the sector with young people, with a view to recruiting them once they have gained a better understanding of logistics. The target audience for this work will be 11 – 16 year olds. However, there will be a particular focus on those students who are 14 - 15 years of age. Logistics employers will be involved significantly throughout the project, in order to ensure the accuracy and appropriateness of any resources that are



Ian Hetherington, Chief Executive of Skills for Logistics

In the UK alone, logistics is the fifth largest industry sector, it employs almost two million people and it turns over in excess of £55 billion each year. The UK is a recognised market leader in logistics – not a universal boast in other industries. Our approaches, management and systems are admired the world over in many different supply chains.

So, why is it that the industry suffers from recruitment problems?

Well, first impressions count, and the image of the logistics industry in this country is poor. For school children considering future careers, logistics doesn't even make it on to their radar. There is a total lack of understanding of the industry and what it entails, its entire scope often being reduced to "furry driving".

Skills for Logistics, the sector skills council for the freight logistics industries is attempting to tackle this problem through a programme aimed at raising awareness of the industry in schools and promoting logistics through the curriculum. The project is supported by industry trade associations including the

produced.

"Logistics suffers from an 'ugly duckling' image and as a result tends not to appeal to young people. Career prospects are not promoted enough and the overriding profile of the industry's workforce is middle-aged, white and male – Labour Market Intelligence support this (driving trucks above 7.5 tonnes) are female, 1.5% are from ethnic minority groups and 1.91% are under 25," says Ian Hetherington, Chief Executive of Skills for Logistics.

Over the coming years, both awareness raising activities and curriculum materials will be rolled out to cover further regions across the country. In future it is hoped that logistics will shake off its "ugly duckling" image and blossom into a swan-like career choice for young people seeking an exciting and varied career.

For more information, contact Skills for Logistics on 01908 313360.

www.skillsforlogistics.org

Skills for Logistics' School's Programme Goes Ahead



Skills for Logistics, the Sector Skills Council for the freight logistics industries, is pleased to announce that it has received £137,000 in funding for the first year of its School's Programme, from the Trustees of the Road Haulage Distribution Training Council (RHDTCT). A cheque was presented to Andrew Callaghan - Chairman and Ian Hetherington - Chief Executive of Skills for Logistics at the Road Haulage Association's (RHA) Annual Lunch at London's Savoy Hotel by Roger King, Chief Executive RHA, along with additional RHDTCT Trustee members, James Hood from the British Association of Removers and Richard Turner of Freight Transport Association.

ENERGY



A new lightweight truck design that could be built using carbon-fibre from MIRA.

For too long, companies have put profits before the environment and consumers are no longer willing to accept this stance. But are things really changing? There are lots of headlines about hybrid road fleets and experiments with environmentally friendly technology. But are these changes really making a difference in the grand scheme of things or is it simply hot air?

Faced with increasing environmental scrutiny, splashes of green in the press will no longer suffice. Organisations need to ensure their operations are green throughout. The Kyoto Protocol has called for a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, but in the UK, at least, emissions actually increased by 1.5% last year. Companies need to act now and make changes that will reduce their carbon emissions in the shorter term. However, studies by AMR Research suggest that efforts to improve the efficiency of shipping and transport are currently a fairly low priority for most organisations. In a recent survey of companies in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain, only 8% of respondents said they were already involved in initiatives to make shipping and transport more efficient, or were planning such measures within the next 12 months.

At the other end of the scale, increasingly environmentally selective consumers are looking for organisations to make sweeping changes to cut carbon emissions now. The notion that goods imported from China have a heavier carbon footprint than those produced locally is beginning to affect purchase decisions and these concerns will shape global trade patterns in the coming years. Major retailers, such as Tesco and Wal-Mart, are already looking at ways to measure the carbon footprint of any given product and provide this information to consumers. In this case, headline-grabbing research into exciting new technologies will be irrelevant if consumers can see that the product currently has a significantly higher carbon footprint compared to similar products.

Sourcing goods from local suppliers and bringing

Green is firmly on the agenda of many companies. From retailers and manufacturers to shipping lines and logistics providers, no one is safe from the green agenda, and rightly so says Ewan French MILT. How can we progress to a green supply chain and does low carbon have to mean increased cost?

manufacturing back closer to the end consumer are obvious alternatives. In certain cases, organisations will be able to source product locally and some of the increased cost can be passed on to consumers, willing to pay a premium for low-carbon products. But companies are in business to make money and, even with the additional transport costs, they are saving huge amounts by offshoring manufacturing to countries such as China. Add to this the substantial investments that companies have made in Asia and it is fair to assume that they will not be willing to sacrifice low cost for low carbon. However, sacrifices are not always needed to achieve the same end result and it is the false perception that low carbon equals increased cost that is proving one of the key barriers to organisations embracing environmental initiatives wholeheartedly. This view needs to change.

Environmental campaigners need to focus on the positive aspects of low-carbon initiatives if they are to persuade businesses truly to buy in to the concept. Indeed, AMR Research found that the major driver behind companies' decisions to invest in the environment is actually because it also presents a business opportunity. Some 54% of respondents claimed that energy and emissions reductions and improvements to energy efficiencies were initiatives that they were actively involved in or planning to get involved in within the next 12 months. The fact that these initiatives will also undoubtedly help reduce energy bills is obviously a clear factor behind such decisions.

California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently compared environmentalists to 'prohibitionists at a fraternity party'. What businesses need to understand is that this is no longer the case and there are many more ways to reduce carbon emissions cost-effectively than simply switching computers off at night!

Green supply chain

However much businesses try to ignore it and pretend it is somebody else's problem, the supply chain is a key area where they can reduce carbon emissions. What is more, for organisations committed to importing goods from the Far East it is their responsibility actively to reduce carbon emissions from the supply chain. To be fair, many businesses are already taking a more active stance on reducing emissions and aggressive carbon targets are being set at board level. The challenge for logistics managers is to ensure that their supply chains are able to achieve them. One of the key stumbling blocks for any company bent on reducing its carbon footprint is how to measure it in the first place. There is currently no

industry or global standard. Nor does a long supply chain necessarily mean that the carbon footprint of a given product is higher than that of the same product sourced locally. The key to success therefore is having the right information. Only then can companies really understand where they can cut down on their carbon emissions and whether they can reduce costs at the same time.

For most companies, operational changes alone will not be enough. Switching to hybrid trucks will obviously reduce carbon emissions and the publicity may place the company in a positively green light in the eye of the consumer, but the effect is minimal when compared to what can be achieved through a complete overhaul of the supply chain.

Relocating warehouses, increasing sea transport and switching distribution centre configurations are moves that will have the greatest impact on carbon emissions overall. The bottom line is that over 80% of carbon savings are only achievable at the design stage. Companies therefore need to analyse their entire supply chain strategy and ensure that it is designed in terms not only of the traditional levers of cost and service level, but also of carbon emissions. Before companies start making sweeping changes to their supply chains, it is critical that they plan and understand these changes properly.

The software is already available for companies to analyse the carbon footprint of their supply chains and then evaluate various different design configurations and transport options before needing to make any changes. By calculating the carbon footprint of any supply chain, together with optimal designs based on cost and service levels, companies can often find ways to reduce costs and carbon emissions at the same time. Another important factor in supply chain planning is the need to do it regularly. Changing patterns in global trade mean companies must look at their supply chain structure continuously to ensure optimum efficiency. New road networks, improved rail connections or additional port calls can all provide opportunities to improve a supply chain in terms of cost, service and carbon. In the case of China and other rapidly developing countries in particular, road networks are under construction and shipping lines are offering direct connections to Europe and the USA from an ever increasing number of ports. The best configuration yesterday might not be the best today, and companies must be prepared to keep abreast of developments.

In Europe, too, the scene is changing. Governments are acutely aware of their nations' carbon emissions

and need to find ways to meet international commitments on emissions targets. They are aware that by taking cargo off the roads, they are not only reducing direct carbon emissions but also relieving congestion. As such, many countries are investing in rail and port infrastructure to give companies improved choices. Sea transport is not only the most cost-effective transport method, but is also the least expensive in terms of carbon emissions. While organisations obviously utilise sea transportation from the Far East to Europe, for example, they may not be taking advantage of sea connections that can position goods even closer to their destination. One particular European manufacturer recently found that by switching from road transport to sea transport for relatively short journeys it was able to reduce costs by 9% and at the same time reduce carbon emissions by 28%.

In conclusion

There are numerous ways for a company to show its green credentials, many of which can also provide strong business benefits. For serious organisations committed to leading the market in environmentally friendly initiatives, now is the time to ensure the green image soaks through to core of the business. Carbon emissions will certainly begin to impact on the way organisations do business. However, companies will do well to remember that although sourcing goods from across the globe does not appear to sit well with ambitious targets for cutting carbon emissions, by analysing the entire supply chain in terms of cost, service and carbon emissions it is entirely possible to achieve a win-win situation.

About the author Ewan French is COO Network Design at inventory and supply chain planning specialists Barloworld Optimus. He has worked on a number of projects designed to analyse optimal supply chain configurations across complex global supply chains and provides companies with expert advice to help them identify effective business solutions. www.barloworldoptimus.com

For more information on global sourcing and the environment, why not join the Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport's Sustainable Distribution Forum? See website www.ciltuk.org.uk for more information.



ATEX VERSION OF TOUCHPC 'RAVEN' LAUNCHED

TouchStar Technologies are pleased to announce the launch of an ATEX-approved version of its 'Raven' device, which provides industries such as chemical, oil and gas, and pharmaceuticals, with a powerful, intrinsically safe and extremely rugged mobile computer.

Definition of ATEX

The acronym ATEX comes from the French atmosphères explosible (explosive environments). To qualify as a potentially explosive atmosphere, the area must contain the flammable substance(s) and air and be under atmospheric conditions. An explosive environment would at first appear to include anywhere liquid fuels, flammable gases and explosives are stored or used, but explosions can occur in less obvious places such as where there are large amounts of dust or even flour suspended in the air.

The 'Raven' mobile computer has been ATEX-certified for use in Zone 2 conditions (Full approval designation - CE Ex II 3G EEx nL IIC T4X). In addition, the product's accessories meet the latest associated apparatus certifications to provide the

highest level of safety. The ATEX version of 'Raven' also comes with a higher, IP65 (totally protected against dust, protected against low pressure jets of water from all directions) rating than the standard model which is rated to IP54. TouchStar designed the 'Raven' with the elimination of arcing and static electricity as key design principles. TouchStar handheld computers are already in regular use around re-fuelling stations, airport aprons, in factories and often in enclosed spaces, each of which represents a specific explosive risk. This vast experience was utilised in the design of the 'Raven'. All internal circuitry and mechanical parts are rigorously tested and are not put into production until any possible source of sparking is eliminated. External sockets and plugs, also potential arcing weak spots, have undergone specific design and manufacture techniques to avert sparking. Finally, the polycarbonate shell that is essential to the Raven's durability is treated seriously as a source of static electricity. TouchStar have gone to great lengths to ensure that static accumulation is not a danger.

Key Features of the TouchPC Raven

The TouchPC Raven offers high-end mobile computing performance within a lightweight, sleek design. The large format touch screen computer is designed to the same exacting standards as all Touchstar products. The TouchPC Raven whilst designed to be predominantly vehicle-mounted, utilises an innovative quick-release mechanism allowing the user to detach it from the vehicle and switch smoothly and easily to a portable mode of operation. Key features include;

- multiple connectivity options (SD & CF cards, Serial etc.)
- on-board GPS for vehicle & personnel tracking
- on-board GPRS for optimum communication
- rugged build, environmentally sealed polycarbonate case
- vehicle mounted or portable, with quick-release bracket
- easy to program Windows CE.NET platform
- large high-resolution touch screen



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Oakland's Investment and Growth secures Volume Contracts.



Multi-temperature supply chain specialist and third party logistics distribution organisation, Worcestershire based Oakland International Limited, is celebrating securing multiple high volume contracts.

The latest contract for Oakland's specialist operation is with Isigny Sainte-Mère, a French dairy co-operative, known throughout the world for quality dairy products and milk powders. The contract will involve Oakland handling in excess of one million cases of dairy product per year from Isigny's two production facilities in Normandy, all product destined for the shelves of major retailers and foodservice outlets throughout the UK. Oakland's operations director, Paul Ziolek, commenting on the contract said: "We are delighted to be working with Isigny Sainte-Mère and over time developing our relationship even further."

A commitment to ongoing investment and expansion of the company's PROTEUS® Warehouse Management Software has helped support Oakland's increasing capacity and complimented their overall expansion. Oakland believes that this investment along with its policy of treating clients with respect, open and honest communication and dedication to deliver the highest standards of service, is the reason behind their expanding client base and increased business from established clients. With an ideal centrally located, Midland distribution operation, Oakland is now out in the market place quoting for accounts with throughputs of over 200,000

BELGRAVIUM LAUNCH THE MOBILE DATA PORTAL™

Modern businesses feed upon mission-critical data. Ideally this data is delivered in real-time or near real-time from wherever the employee is situated. The world is moving towards mobile devices which employees can carry easily and which give them a huge degree of independence, yet let their company know of their whereabouts and activities. The net result is that employees and clients are happier – and key corporate data reaches the organisation in a timely manner, providing significant competitive advantage. Easier said than done? Not if you utilise The Mobile Data Portal™ from Belgravium.

Mobile computing devices find a use in almost every walk of life, whether it be for stock control within a large warehouse, providing mobility of patient data in a hospital, enabling field service engineers to better fault-find and order replacement parts.....and countless other applications. Public and private sector organizations generally recognize the value of equipping their employees with mobile devices that can directly improve productivity; the difficulty often comes in connecting the data captured remotely with the organization's key business-driver software packages at the 'back-end'. These back-end software packages are often highly complex and powerful systems such as ERP, CRM, WMS and Service Management and represent a significant capital investment.

To ensure 100% utilization of the software's functionality, when all employees are in a fixed location, can be challenge enough. Adding the complexity of mobile working and remote communication can be a nightmare but often this is a necessary business requirement. Take the example of a warehouse operation. Real-time radio technology is now commonplace within a modern warehouse, allowing total visibility of goods throughout all key activities from goods-in through to dispatch. It's with dispatch that the problems start. Often the goods are loaded onto the vehicle and then real-time visibility is lost. The commercial consequences can be significant. Late delivery can be catastrophic to the next element in the supply chain and, ultimately, customers will be dissatisfied. Moreover, in the modern business world there is an expectation from customers that a producer should be able to provide total traceability throughout the manufacturing and supply chain.

cases per week. Paul said "We enjoy working with customers to develop a solution to suit individual requirements. As a supply chain partner, we are able to provide a flexible, cost effective and reactive consolidation service, with a guaranteed picking accuracy."

Focusing on the Isigny account, Oakland's IT department working with software partners Proteus and EDI specialists, Freeway Commerce, have ensured data links between Isigny's Normandy base, Oakland's Worcestershire HQ and retailers all over the UK are robustly interlinked. "This was a challenging project," said Paul, "with the result being that Oakland are capable of providing an immediate turn-around on all stock lines on arrival at our depot."

European export manager for Isigny Sainte-Mère, Jacques-Yves L'Honen, added: "Oakland shares the same values and has a similar type of structure in terms of staff, size, and Isigny has chosen to work with Oakland due to its high standards, knowledge and its relationships with UK retailers"

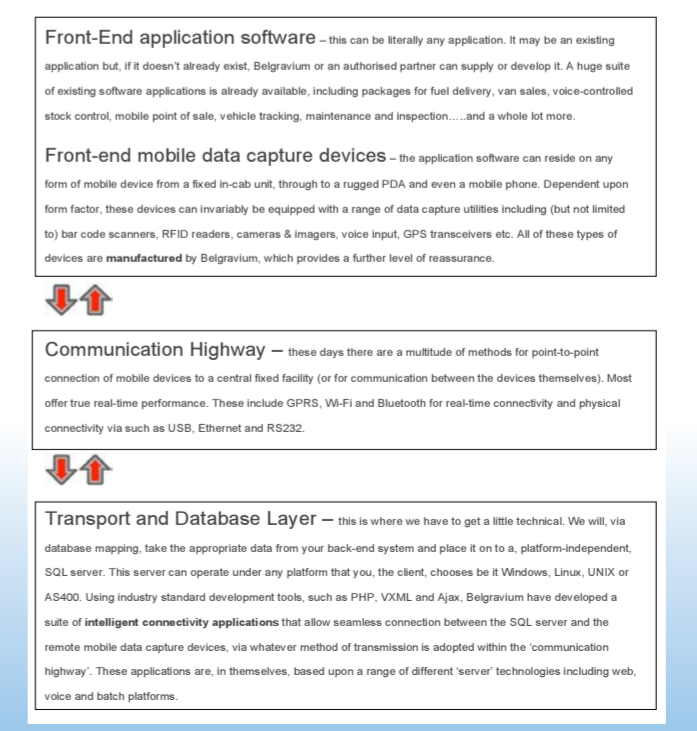
Oakland has a reputation for handling large volume accounts such as Highgrove Distribution and May and Raeburn, whilst retaining a passion for helping the smaller regional suppliers with a route to market via their chilled and ambient consolidation schemes. Paul said "Our schemes provide smaller operations with a cost effective route to market. We welcome customers with growth potential and we focus on regional sourcing, actively working on this strategy with our network partners to develop complementary and time reducing supply chain ideas. As part of this project, our MD, Dean Attwell, in partnership with Leverdiff Associates, addresses regional events presenting manufacturers new to the market, with an insight into the inner workings of the supply chain."

A fast growing organisation, Oakland continues to increase and develop products and services, many of which are developed in direct response to customer request. With suppliers struggling to find a cost effective route to Ireland, Oakland has now implemented dedicated routing to Ireland, operating four times a week. Additional services to mainstream chilled, ambient and frozen storage and distribution include Oakland's innovative chilled and frozen parcel delivery service, the 'Nippy Box', which has recently

Often it can appear that the technical challenges to providing total visibility are almost insurmountable, as if an impenetrable solid wall has been placed between the mobile worker and the back-end system located at corporate HQ. The aim of the Belgravium Mobile Data Portal™ is simple. Our middleware product will provide you with universal data connectivity and transparency, whatever your back-end system, whatever your core operating platform, whatever your communication medium, whatever your development tools, whatever your front-end data capture device..... 'whatever' anything!

The manner in which we achieve such comprehensive and total connectivity is, in reality, highly complex and based directly upon our decades of acquired experience in the data capture sector. Many man years of development work have gone into the creation of The Mobile Data Portal™. For our customers, however, the process is far from painful. Obviously, we will need to consult closely with you to determine your overall business objective and the specifics of the data input / output that you require but thereafter it's over to us. We will use The Mobile Data Portal™ to provide you with a turnkey system that meets your data flow requirement exactly. So, what is The Mobile Data Portal™?

The diagram below is a simplified description of its key components.

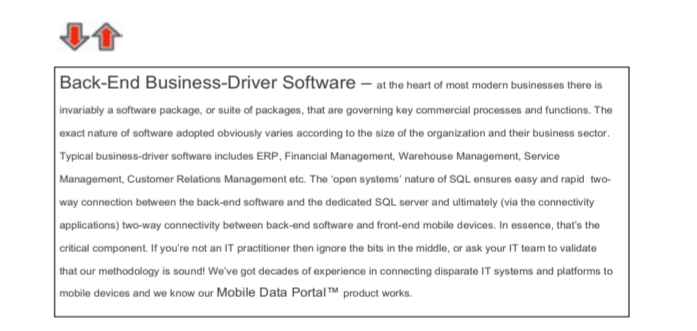


expanded into Europe.

Consolidation schemes in chilled and ambient warehousing, distressed load management, extensive food and consumer goods contract packing, ready meals, export product re-labelling, seasonal hamper packing and a dedicated facility to the tempering of product, a growing part of their expanding operation. The integrity of Oakland's supply chain is crucial and all services are underpinned by their quality experience. BRC accredited for the last six years, Oakland's dedicated Quality Assurance department currently holds the highest BRC grading achievable.

On target to attain a turnover of £6 million by the end of this year, rapid growth compared to £4m in 2006 and a firm business plan in place for the next 10 years, which includes replicating the original Oakland model in a number of locations across the UK, and Europe, MD, Dean Attwell, commenting on their achievements said: "These are exciting times for the Oakland team and for our customers. As a business we are capable of growing still further and we are eager for our team and customers to grow with us."

For further information about Oakland's products and services please go to www.oakland-international.com, email: sales@oakland-international.com or call +44 (0)1527 596222



About Belgravium

Belgravium design and manufacture Radio Frequency Data Communications (RFDC) and mobile computing systems. The company's ability to integrate wireless technology to all types of business management system has enabled a steady growth since its foundation in 1982. During this period the product range has expanded to include;

- hand held mobile computers
- vehicle mount terminals
- full screen terminals
- high speed pick by light systems
- wireless LAN infrastructure
- voice recognition systems
- RFID tag reading hardware

Belgravium are widely considered as a leading manufacturer within the AIDC industry and have a large and varied customer base to reinforce this. With well in excess of 300 site installations throughout Europe, Belgravium's customer base includes many household names in manufacturing, retail and distribution. Some of Belgravium's major users include Corus, Toys R Us, John West, Great Universal Stores, Coca-Cola, Hygena and prominent names within the Third Party Logistics sector, Wincanton, P&O, Ceva Logistics and more

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