

Taking Xplore's Rugged Tablet PC's to the Cooler

Clare Rose Inc. began as a small soda water distributing firm in 1936. It was established by Clare F Rose and located in Patchogue, New York. Known at the time as C. Rose Distributing, the brands that were sold were "Mission" and "Plaza" beverages. By 1944, C. Rose Distributing was the largest independent soda water distributor in Suffolk County. In 1947, C. Rose Distributing was appointed as the "Anheuser-Busch" wholesale distributor for eastern Suffolk County. Today Clare Rose, which is still privately held, is one of the top wholesale distributors for Anheuser-Busch. Their customers include over 5,000 businesses in Suffolk and Nassau counties, and those businesses comprise of supermarkets, convenience stores, gas stations, restaurants, bars and country clubs to name a few.

Situation – Looking for expanded functionality

In 1981 Clare Rose started using hand held computing devices with small screens and briefcase printers. They continued to use this type of technology for many years. In 2003 Clare Rose began investigating alternative solutions. They were being driven by the need to capture more information and meet the requirements of new mandates from Anheuser-Busch. One of those requirements was to do a survey of Displays and Taps that Anheuser-Busch requires to be completed routinely on customer accounts. In addition, Clare Rose wanted the ability to track sales



objective executions on a tablet PC. These sales objectives are created on the host computer and then synchronized with the tablet PC software. Lastly, Clare Rose wanted to better equip its driver salesmen to service its customers. These driver salesmen conduct several activities at the customer sites including inventory, sales and delivery, merchandising, and surveys so maximizing their efficiency was really important to Clare Rose.

Process - Selecting the product that meets their needs

Gary Neumen, CIO for Clare Rose, took on the task of identifying a new mobile computing platform. Based on his 25 years of experience with Clare Rose and knowledge of the needs of the driver salesmen, Gary developed a list of evaluation criteria; the most important of which were durability, outdoor viewable, weight and a windows based operating system. The list of potential computing was narrowed to two products including the Xplore iX104 Tablet PC and a semi-rugged laptop product. These choices were presented to the company's ownership. Clare Rose realized the potential reliability issues with the semi-rugged clam shell design laptop and

decided to implement the iX104 Tablet PC. Clare Rose selected the iX104 not only because it met their requirements but that the screen could be seen in direct sunlight. In addition, they liked the ruggedness of the outer casing of the tablet and the durability of the internal components. The size of the iX104 screen was really important, especially compared to the previously used hand held product.

As part of developing this new mobile solution Clare Rose worked closely with MiT Systems of Fullerton California who developed the Peddle route application. The software solution created by MiT Systems met all of Clare Rose's specifications as well as Anhesuer-Busch's requirements.

In the spring of 2004, Clare Rose began implementing the Xplore Tablet PC's and were fully deployed by mid-summer.

Solution – Fast, portable and reliable solution



The Xplore product is now utilized to record customer inventory, view open invoices, take orders, print invoices and take payment from customers on site. The driver salesmen can change information on accounts in the field. That information is stored on the computer and the system is updated at the end of the day when the sales people return to the office. Inventories freshness can be monitored as well. The driver salesmen can track code dates on product in order to make sure that inventory is rotated properly and the customer gets a

product with consistent quality. Clare Rose's solution also incorporates a mobile printer that communicates wirelessly with the iX104 Tablet PC. In the future, Clare Rose will equip driver salesmen with electronic documents such as sales presentations on new products or marketing campaigns. These materials will be presented to customers onsite via the tablets.

Benefits – Maximizing the investment

According to Gary Neumen the deployment has been a success. The iX104 is easier to use and is more intuitive. "It was relatively easy to train our supervisors and driver salesmen," says Neumen. The Xplore product enables Clare Rose to do more than the previous hand held devices. The hand held devices would have required more time at the customer site to complete the necessary tasks. The Windows platform along with the MiT Systems software on the iX104 computer presents a more professional image to their customer. Neumen estimates that they save an estimated ½ hour per day on each route at customer sites by using their new mobile computing system versus using the old style hand held device; that translates into over 8,700 labor hours saved over the course of a year.

In addition, driver salesmen save time now because they can accomplish more on the tablet PC, viewing less screens to accomplish the same tasks. Clare Rose is also experiencing savings with regard to the customer surveys required by Anheuser–Busch. Before the deployment of the new mobile computing solution, Clare Rose would have to complete surveys on paper and then bring those surveys back to the office to be recorded into their database by another person. Now the survey is completed electronically in the field so there is no double entry of information. In addition, the accuracy of the survey has increased because the information is being entered once.

Employee Feedback

The driver salesmen really like the new computer system and appreciate the amount of information available to them. They believe that it looks more professional and would not take their old hand held devices back.

