Case Study

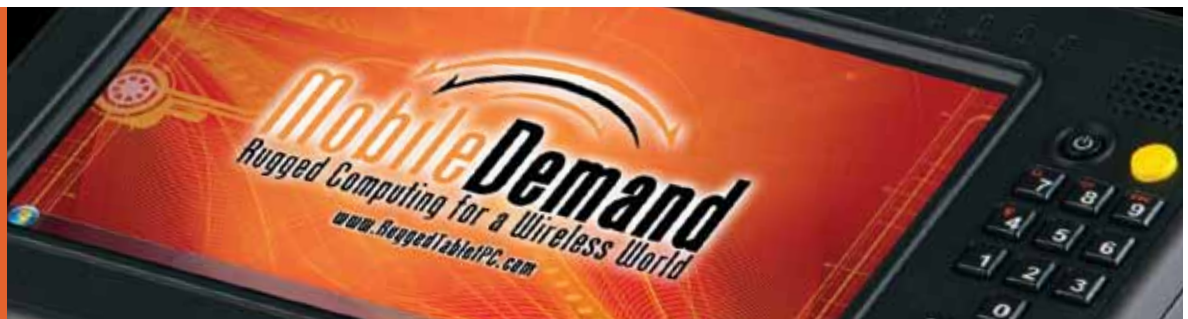## Ben E. Keith

Industry: Beverage Distribution

CHALLENGE

Find a mobile computing solution that:

- Supports Anheuser-Busch Mobility software
- Provides a best-in-class productivity tool
- Is rugged enough to withstand the demands of the beer distribution environment

SOLUTION

- Replace outdated handheld computers with MobileDemand Rugged Tablet PCs
- Use bar code scanner and keypad to speed up inventory and increase efficiency
- Use Windows 7 functionality and Intel processing power to enhance customer interaction

RESULT

- Reduce time to complete store inventory by 50%
- Improve pre-sales process and sales rep productivity
- Provide better customer service
- Sell more beer

Ben E. Keith Sells More Beer with MobileDemand xTablets

The second largest Anheuser-Busch wholesaler in the U.S. sees immediate benefits

Ben E. Keith is the second largest Anheuser-Busch wholesaler in the United States covering 61 counties in North Texas including Dallas and Fort Worth. Over 250 pre-sale routes service customers throughout the state of Texas.

The company has always been a leader at implementing new technologies to equip its pre-sale reps with the tools they need to sell more beer. It moved away from using paper and pen to take inventory and create orders in the field years ago. So it is no surprise that when the new A-B Mobility route accounting software was implemented recently, Ben E. Keith took the opportunity to refresh its hardware with mobile computers that would give its reps more power and functionality than the handheld devices they were using.

"After we made the decision to move into the A-B Mobility software, we took a lot of time to find just the right piece of equipment for our pre-sales reps. It had to be the right form and offer the right functionality for our guys to hit the streets hard every day," says Steve Fleming, Vice President of Administration and Information for Ben E. Keith.

The Customer Challenge

"The units our reps had been using were pocket-type devices that worked well for taking orders and sending them into the warehouse. But we needed more screen real estate for the Mobility application to render well on the display. In addition to a larger screen the computer had to be rugged and it had to have an integrated scanner and numeric keypad," maintains Fleming.

The other units that Ben E. Keith tried did not have an integrated scanner or a built-in numeric keypad. The MobileDemand tablets did. During testing they found that the reps liked having both. If they knew the item code they could quickly enter it. Otherwise they could easily scan the bar code and move on. It was no longer necessary to scroll through dozens of screens to find a SKU. User feedback and improved efficiency led to a decision.

"We tried several different devices from several different manufacturers, including a ruggedized laptop.

It wasn't until we found the MobileDemand xTablet T7000 that we knew we'd found the ideal tablet PC for our pre-sales reps. It had a full 7" high resolution screen, an integrated scanner and numeric keypad which really drove improvements in efficiency. And the xTablet was rugged, really rugged. It was just the right fit at the right time," says Fleming.

"As you know selling beer is not a gentle business. Our guys put these tablets through the ringer. They have taken some bumps and bruises in the cooler as the reps move beer around. They've fallen off stacks of beer. They've tumbled off the hoods of cars. It's a hard environment. A non-rugged device just wouldn't hold up. I know there are all kinds of non-rugged and Android devices out there. They look good and are light weight. But they just wouldn't survive in our environment. You have to protect your investment. We've had very good luck with the xTablets. They keep on working which keeps our reps working," Fleming asserts.
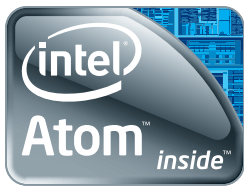
The MobileDemand Solution

A typical day for a Ben E. Keith pre-sales rep begins when he arrives at the warehouse to pick up his xTablet. He completes the beginning day tasks and meets with his sales supervisor to review goals. Then he hits the road making an average of 10-13 stops a day.

"The xTablet T7000 is very beneficial in the field. It keeps me organized by telling me what I need to get accomplished at each account. It also saves a tremendous amount of time when doing inventory," says Pre-Sales Rep Aaron Nelson. "We have over 2,500 active items right now. With the xTablet I don't have to jump around from brand to brand. I can start scanning bar codes at one end of the cooler and just keep moving down to the other side. I just scan, inventory and order. It's that simple, and that fast. What used to take 20-25 minutes to complete, I can now get done in less than ten," Nelson affirms.

After the Ben E. Keith pre-sales rep completes inventory, rotation, and creates the order, he meets with the store manager to review the order and pricing. He also uses this face time to talk over new promotions or show the latest TV commercial. The all-light readable display provides an excellent viewing experience whether they are standing in a low light environment like a cooler or outdoors in the bright sun. With the xTablet and the power of the Intel processor, the rep can even show the customer an on-screen calculator that takes the data from the order created and tells the store manager the exact profit it will generate.

"With the old units we really couldn't get the information in front of the customer that we can now. The wireless radio lets me sync and get updated information from the office instantly to share with the customer. Everything is in real-time," says Nelson.

"I'm one of the old dogs here. I started with Ben E. Keith 13 years ago when we took inventory and wrote up orders with pen and paper. With the number of SKUs we're managing now, the old method just wouldn't work. The xtablets keep us much more focused and efficient. And the built-in numeric keypad and bar code scanner mean fewer punches and a lot fewer mistakes," Nelson continues.

The xTablets:

- *Allow quick and easy data input with bar code scanner and built-in numeric keypad, dramatically improving efficiency*
- *Rugged design minimizes business interruption and lowers total cost of ownership*
- *Full Windows 7 OS and Intel processor provide all the functionality and power sales reps need to sell more beer*
- *And, most importantly, enable sharing critial, real-time data that speeds decision making and results in increased productivity*

The Results

The MobileDemand xTablets not only give Ben E. Keith pre-sales reps the ability to reduce errors, increase productivity and improve customer service, these rugged tablets also provide more uptime and lower the total cost of ownership. The full Microsoft® Windows 7 operating system helped accelerate deployment and training. "Having Windows 7 made it easy to image the tablets and make updates. And our reps were already familiar with the operating system which made implementation and training seamless," Fleming says. "It's all in the bottom line results. The MobileDemand tablets simply have the right combination of features and functionality to help our pre-sales reps make better decisions at the point of customer interaction. Plus, the ruggedability of the xTablets has virtually eliminated business interruptions caused by device downtime, allowing our reps to do what they do best," he proclaims.

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Rugged Computing for a Wireless World