



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Schenck Company Invests in Durability for Demanding Delivery Environment

Beer Distributor Chooses Zebra® RW 420™ for Proven Ruggedness

About Schenck Company

Since 1954, Schenck® Company has provided beverages to the Central Florida region, which includes Orlando and coastal resort towns. From just six employees, the company has grown to 600 associates and serves 6,000 customers. Now within the top 20 beer distributors in the country, the full-service distributor represents MillerCoors, Crown Imports, Heineken USA, Diageo-Guinness, Boston Beer and other domestic, import and craft breweries. A commitment to its employees and customers has helped land Schenck among Florida's top 100 privately-held companies.

Challenge

Every day, 90 Schenck delivery drivers bring hundreds of cases to retailers. With each stop, they verify orders, capture the customer's signature electronically and print a receipt.

For several years, the company has relied on a combination of handheld devices and mobile printers; however, the demanding delivery environment quickly wears down the electronics.

"It's a pretty tough environment. Drivers are going in and out of 10-15 accounts per day, in and out of coolers, delivering upwards of 800 cases a day," said Kent Meckley, director of IT at Schenck. "Equipment is constantly being sat on cooler kegs and bounced around."

Schenck tried two different types of printers previously. One type wore out after only a few months. The other held up longer but still gave out faster than expected. When only about a third of the equipment still worked, and drivers were writing invoices manually, Schenck began looking for a more rugged alternative.

Solution

Working with Barcoding Inc., a mobile applications company, Schenck replaced all its mobile equipment. On the firm's recommendation, Schenck chose Motorola® Symbol handhelds and Zebra® RW 420™ printers. The printers wirelessly connect to the handhelds, which are synched with Schenck's backend software, eoStar.

The direct thermal printers print receipts up to 4 inches wide at 3 inches per second. As the only mobile printer to meet the stringent IP54 dust- and water-resistance rating, the RW 420 withstands the weather and extreme temperatures that drivers encounter.

The company first tested five of the units for several months to assess their ease of use and durability. The trial provided two key benefits: Schenck gained greater confidence to invest in units for the entire fleet, and the test drivers became champions who got others excited about the change. However, most drivers were so frustrated with the existing equipment and manual processes that they readily embraced the new setup.

Customer

Schenck Company

Industry

Beverage

Challenge

In the rugged delivery environment, mobile devices quickly wore out, forcing drivers to write invoices manually.

Partner

Barcoding Inc.

Zebra Solution

Zebra RW 420 printers

Results

- With more durable devices, Schenck significantly minimizes the amount of time that drivers must resort to writing out manual invoices.
- The company saves time and improves accuracy on stops.
- Durability decreases capital costs over the long run compared to with previous units.



(Continued)

The right asset. In the right place. At the right time.



By choosing more rugged equipment from the start, Schenck did invest more than if it had gone with less durable devices. However, the investment will pay off in longevity.

“There’s no way you can run a beer distributorship on non-rugged devices,” Meckley said. “You can always find something that’s cheaper upfront, but that doesn’t necessarily mean it’s cheaper in the long run. It was worth it to invest in equipment to not have delivery drivers recalculating invoices while they were out at a retail account.”

In addition to investing in quality upfront, Schenck chose to add comprehensive warranties for the handhelds and printers to ensure replacement when they are damaged. When mishaps occur, Schenck sends the units in for repair under warranty as quickly as possible to minimize downtime.

Schenck also invested in a 10 percent spare ratio to prevent drivers from having to go back to paper and pen.

“When you take into account discounts and promotions, the pricing could change when drivers deliver,” Meckley said. “It’s not worth it for the drivers to recalculate an invoice when they’re at retail. It’s much easier to let the handheld do it and the printer to print out a hard copy than trying to write out a manual invoice.”

Results

With Motorola and Zebra, drivers continue following the mobile process they have established in recent years, but with more reliability. With more durable devices, Schenck significantly minimizes the amount of time that drivers must resort to writing out manual invoices—saving time and improving accuracy on each customer stop.

Just as critical, the company expects devices to last for years, decreasing capital costs over the long run compared to with previous units.

“It’s a great solution,” Meckley said. “We’ve been running it for a year now and are very happy with both the printers and the handhelds.”

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