ZEBRA

Zebra Takes the Cake in Head-to-Head Printer Comparison at Tastykake

In 1914, a baker and egg salesman decided to join together to produce baked goods with the freshest ingredients. When the baker's wife deemed the results of their efforts "tasty," Tastykake was born. Now, the Philadelphia-based company sells more than $250 million worth of cakes and pies annually across the East Coast.

Challenge

With nearly 500 delivery routes, Tastykake brings fresh baked goods to hundreds of stores every day. The faster that drivers can restock each location, the more stops they can make in a day.

Drivers use Zebra® MC9000 handheld mobile computers to log the inventory coming off and onto store shelves. As they bring in new products, they print out invoices for each store on printers back in their trucks.

In an effort to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and add new capabilities, Tastykake began looking at new mobile printers.

"The old printers were big fixed units with a lot of moving parts," said Brendan O'Malley, vice president and chief information officer at Tastykake. "We wasted a lot of paper, went through a lot of ribbons, and they weren't as flexible or reliable as we wanted."

SUMMARY

Customer
Tastykake

Industry
Food Manufacturing

Challenge
With nearly 500 delivery routes every day, Tastykake needed a way to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and add new capabilities to their direct store delivery processes.

Solution
Zebra RW 420

Results
• Superior print quality drives down paper usage and consumable costs.
• New functionality provides flexibility for future process improvements.

Solution

Tastykake looked at a number of different printing solutions and found that the RW 420™ from Zebra Technologies was one of the few mobile printers that were rugged and met IP54 dust and water resistance ratings, making it appropriate for use in direct store delivery. Tastykake selected three printers to compare and put them in the hands of route drivers for testing. For comparison, drivers tested each printer for two weeks. At the end, they rated the printers against each other on a scale of 1-5, with 5 the top score. Across five key indicators, Zebra printers earned an average score of 4.6, while the incumbent printers earned a score of 3.0.

"We gave drivers the choice and they chose Zebra nearly unanimously," O'Malley said. Although drivers preferred Zebra, O'Malley was concerned about printer compatibility with existing handheld applications — especially given the number of routes the company runs. If upgrades affected the integration between computers and printers, complications in the field could outweigh the benefits of switching.

However, Zebra offered emulation firmware that greatly simplified the transition. Centrategy, a Zebra partner, created the custom firmware for Zebra, allowing Zebra printers to talk to Tastykake applications.

"The emulation firmware allows the Zebra RW 420s to act just like our old printer. The applications don't know the difference," O'Malley said. "It was a lot more straightforward and less expensive. We were able to roll out the new printers with no impact to applications. It was the simplest rollout we've ever done. That firmware was absolutely critical to our decision to switch to Zebra."

Results

Zebra printers have withstood the demands of the Tastykake delivery environment. "Zebra printers are rugged, compact, fast and inexpensive to operate," O'Malley said.

Tastykake is able to use considerably less paper than with its previous printers. "The clarity of the print is superior and this allows us to work with a smaller-format invoice, saving significant paper and, of course, money."

While most drivers still keep printers in their trucks, Zebra printers give drivers the flexibility to carry them into customer sites if desired. That capability will prove essential as Tastykake moves into the next phase — electronic signature capture. With that step, the company will further reduce paper use and give customers access to electronic copies of documents much faster and more efficiently.

"We have flexibility for future processes," O'Malley said. "As we deploy new functionality such as signature capture, the transition should be much easier with the Zebra printer."

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> **Brendan O'Malley, Vice President and Chief Information Officer**

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