



SUMMARY

Customer

Smartbox

Industry

OEM

Location

Worldwide

Challenge

Smartbox's initial requirement was for a swift delivery of robust, enterprise tablets to fulfil outstanding orders and assist the NHS in freeing up critical beds; the tablets were needed for both mobile users and those that required a mounted solution, whether on a wheelchair or floor stand. However, Smartbox also had a longer-term requirement for a best-in-class ruggedised tablet with customisable accessories for its Grid Pad range

Solution

- Zebra ET51 10-inch Tablet (ongoing for Grid Pad range)
- Zebra ET50 10-inch Tablet (initial order)
- Smartbox Grid 3 software
- A range of accessories including chargers, as well as splash screen and rugged cases that are both being rebranded with the Smartbox logo

Results

- Smartbox solutions are transforming lives worldwide, by enabling those with disabilities to communicate and live more independently
- The Zebra tablets perfectly meet Smartbox's user requirements in terms of ruggedness, reliability, processing speed and weight, whilst maintaining a sleek design; feedback has been excellent
- Users rely on the tablets to be their voice, and more, which is why the all-day battery life of the Zebra devices is essential
- Excellent collaboration with the Zebra OEM team for swift deployment and rebranding

Smartbox Selects Zebra Tablets For Its Augmentative And Alternative Communication Solutions For People With Disabilities

Smartbox creates assistive technology solutions that help people with disabilities to communicate and live more independent lives. Headquartered in Malvern, UK, Smartbox also has offices in Bristol and the USA and its solutions are available worldwide. Founded in 2006, the company now has nearly 70 employees. Smartbox provides solutions, ranging from fully featured eye-controlled systems that are mounted on a wheelchair, to lightweight tablet solutions for people that have mobility and can use a touch screen, but have no speech. The range of devices is designed to successfully cater for those who are born with a disability and for those who acquire one later in life; as both have very different, and evolving, needs. Smartbox's largest client is the UK's NHS, which operates a network of Specialist Services dedicated to augmentative and alternative communication (AAC).

Challenge

Smartbox needed an initial small delivery of tablets in very short timeframes, to fulfil outstanding orders and assist the NHS in freeing up critical beds. The tablets were needed for both mobile users and those that required a mounted solution, whether wheelchair or floor stand. The Zebra OEM team stepped in and was able to deliver.

However, in the longer term, Smartbox had been testing a range of tablets on the market for its Grid Pad range. Dougal Hawes explains: "We make communication aids, to give people with a very diverse and wide range of disabilities a way to communicate if they don't have speech. For our Grid Pads we need a really tough, reliable enterprise-grade tablet that can withstand heavy use, indoor and out, and a constant battering. A regular consumer iPad or tablet just couldn't cope. Imagine a child with one of our Grid Pads in a playground during break time for example; it's naturally going to have a hard time. But we also need this tablet to offer fast processing speeds and an all-day, without fail, battery life, combined with a sleek, lightweight (unusual in industrial tablets) design and some Smartbox branding. It's a big ask and the reason why we run regular market tests."

Following the initial delivery of Zebra ET50 tablets, Smartbox realised their worth and is now using the ET51 Zebra tablets with rebranded splash screens and rugged cases for its Grid Pad 8 and Grid Pad 10. As Roy Matthews, Head of Production at Smartbox, observes: "The Zebra OEM team has seamlessly taken our requirement, recognised our needs and provided a solution that is suitable for implementation for both business units."





Solution

Smartbox configures each Zebra ET51 tablet with its totally adaptable and evolving Grid 3 AAC software, bespoke to the needs of each individual. The Windows-based AAC software, which is translated into nearly 30 languages, is used by people of all ages and of all levels of literacy; for example, if a child is born with a disability, they will need to start using symbols to select words, which the software will then read aloud in a child's voice, effectively teaching the child to speak; and Grid 3 can be adapted, as their literacy develops. For an adult who, for example, is diagnosed with motor neurone disease later in life, the situation is totally different; this adult needs the technology to maintain communication and independence, which is why Grid 3 also has integrated tools for emailing, social media and predictive text, for example. Users can also pair their smartphones with the Grid Pads; this enables symbol users' phone messages to be translated between symbols and text. This set-up would look completely different to the first scenario and, indeed, no two AAC requirements are the same, or static, which is why the Grid 3 software platform is unlimited in scope, completely customisable and fluid, to follow transition.

The Grid Pads are often used by those without mobility issues; they come with a range of accessories such as a customised rugged case and splash screen, a strap and a Bluetooth portable speaker, usually worn around the neck on a lanyard. There are also keyguards, cut to match the keys, to assist those who struggle with direct access to select the right key.

A significant part of Smartbox's offering is to create these different resources and then to work closely with its clients, advising them on the right and appropriate selection for their patients. Moreover, its support and training teams offer ongoing assistance, whether remotely or at a user's home, school or place of work.

Results

Dougal Hawes summarises: "I cannot start to describe how it feels when a child, who's never had the ability to talk, communicates for the first time with their parents via the Grid Pads. It's a very profound experience and just one of the many milestone moments our technology can enable; all our solutions are genuinely life-changing and make a massive difference to people's quality of life." And Zebra Technologies is delighted to be a part of these assistive solutions; Cath Lissenden, Zebra's Regional Sales Manager OEM concludes: "It's absolutely fantastic to see Smartbox using our tablets to help people with disabilities find their voice. We look forward to working with Smartbox for many years to come."

"Our business is about ensuring everyone has a voice. We are very passionate about what we do and the difference our technology can make to people's lives. We have an internal mantra: one size fits one. And our solutions really are carefully tailored to the very specific needs of each individual. We are constantly reviewing and updating our offering, both in terms of software and hardware. And, from our latest testing, it was clear that the Zebra ET51 Tablet really met our exact requirements. requirements. We are delighted to be using the Zebra tablets in our Grid Pad range to provide people without speech with a voice and are looking forward to a long-term relationship with the Zebra OEM team."

Dougal Hawes,
Business Development
Director, Smartbox

For more information, please visit: www.zebra.com and www.thinksmartbox.com



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