

**Case Study:**

## CANADA DRY GETS A HAND WITH DISTRIBUTION

Summer is approaching, and with it longer days, searing heat, picnics, barbecues and ice-cold drinks. If your favorite drinks aren't readily available, it's an automatic spirit dampener. Therefore, one of the mandates of success for the beverage industry is maintaining a constant presence of products on store shelves. The Canada Dry Delaware Valley franchise, one of the largest independent soft drink distributors in the United States, handles Canada Dry, 7-Up, Snapple and Arizona Iced Teas, among others, in the greater Philadelphia area, as well as in three New Jersey counties. The franchise, owned by the Honickman Organization, is based in Pennsauken, N.J.

Making the move from DOS- to Windows-based systems helped one company avoid the risk of running dry.

By Michelle Delio



Mark DeRosa of Dynamic Mobile Data practices what he preaches, using a plethora of mobile devices to keep in touch with his clients while on location at a recent San Diego convention.

Tim Manton

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Orders ( version 2.0.0 )

Header	Details	Totals	Status
Product Name	481294 2L PA DUTCH BLACK CHER	7	0 No 0
Product Number	480040 16 ARIZONA LEMON TEA 1:	2	0 No 0
481294	17.5 NANTUCKET AUTHENTIC LB	8	0 No 0
451157	17.5 NANTUCKET KIWI BERRY	8	0 Yes 0
450957	17.5 NANTUCKET GRAPEADE	9	0 No 66
450857	17.5 NANTUCKET FRUIT PUNCH		
450582	17.5 20PK NANTUCKET ORANGE		
450534	12 NANTUCKET ORANGE JUICE		
450282	17.5 20PK NANTUCKET CRANBER		
450234	12 NANTUCKET CRANBERRY JU		
450062	17.5 20PK NANTUCKET APPLE JU		

PCode	PDescription	Qty	Discnt	Smpl	Price
450957	17.5 NANTUCKET GRAPE	6		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	54.23

Save Entry      Total Qty 20      Cancel Entry

Start   Connecting: 49%   Orders ( version 2.0.0 )   2:46 PM

Field reps, responsible for managing inventory and orders at their assigned retail locations, had been using DOS-based handheld devices to compile client and sales information. Some reps had complained that the DOS interface was hard to work with and not at all intuitive, and others said the data transmission speed was too slow. There were also major concerns about the limited transmission range of the radio-frequency network the company was using to provide communications services. Too frequently, a rep was out of range when he needed to push sales information back to the main office. In addition, the process of sending an order from the field was unnecessarily complex, requiring a field rep to initiate the transmission of data. In the rush to get to the next appointment, this step was sometimes forgotten or delayed.

The company decided its primary concern would be moving the information from the field to the back office in a fast, efficient and effortless manner. Executives first looked for a communications carrier. Bell Atlantic's CDPD (cellular digital packet data) network fit the bill—it offered faster transmission rates, better pricing and a potentially wider service area if the Honickman Organization brought segments of its other operations into the network.

Next, the company overhauled its entire field force technical system. It wanted a solution with a user-friendly interface that would allow reps to transmit order information immediately. The

company also needed a scaleable system—something that would allow for easy upgrades and the addition of new capabilities as they were developed. Since Canada Dry Delaware Valley's operations revolve around its field force, it wanted to make sure that the solution was robust and backed by proven technical support. It had to be affordable, too.

### Piecing Together a Solution

Canada Dry Delaware Valley needed a custom solution that could be implemented quickly, it decided to work with Dynamic Mobile Data (DMD), a wireless technology leader supporting Fortune 2000 vertical industry clients. Based in Somerset, N.J., DMD had been developing solutions for small devices for years, programming first with DOS and then with Windows 3.1.

DMD was known for its turnkey wireless gateway between the mobile workforce and an existing LAN, as well as for MobileDispatch, its professional dispatching software, which keeps dispatchers and the field force communicating in real time. The company's professional services organization offers its clients custom wireless and mobile computing solutions.

"We suggested that if they were going to commit the effort and resources to this kind of new project, then they should also investigate using Windows CE-based handheld units," says Mark LaRosa, chief information officer for Dynamic Mobile Data. The suggestion proved to be a wise one.

Salespeople at Canada Dry check stock and delivery dates and send their orders directly to headquarters using a Windows CE-based interface.

LaRosa knew that the Honickman Organization wanted its developers to be able to take over future projects, so the operating system on the chosen hardware had to use standard development tools and technologies.

Despite the new code base developed for Windows CE, the key elements of the Win32 application programming interface were retained so that software developers could use their prior Visual Tools experience to develop custom solutions for use with CE devices, thereby keeping training and development costs down. "If a programmer knows how to develop for Windows NT or the Windows 9x platforms," says LaRosa, "he or she can develop for Windows CE. It [Windows CE] doesn't require a hardware device that costs \$5,000; it operates really well on handheld devices that are priced at a fraction of that cost."

Windows CE now delivers an operating system for small devices that offers robust features similar to that found in Windows NT, such as threading, multitasking, a real graphical user interface and rich programming tools such as Visual Basic and Visual C++.

"The low cost of the Windows CE-based units resulted in a significant savings in our projected hardware costs," says Gwen Dolcimore, vice president of information







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services for the Honickman Organization. CE offered other important benefits. These devices are designed so that all of the operating system software and core applications are protected in a ROM (read only memory) chip, so when a user opens the lid the machine is on and ready for input. Having immediate access to applications

and data is important during a busy sales call. CE devices come with 6.5- to 9.5-inch-wide keyboards; 640 by 240 to 800 by 600 resolution screens (2.25 to 9.5 inches high); and weigh between one to two pounds (versus the three to eight pounds of other notebooks).

CE devices also feature long battery life.

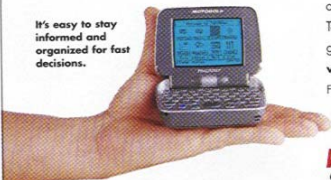
“Since Canada Dry Delaware Valley’s operations revolve around its field force, it wanted to make sure that the solution was robust and backed by proven technical support.”

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The small size of the OS software coupled with specially designed low-power CPUs aids in low battery consumption. The typical handheld PC battery life enables the system to be in use for a full day on one charge, compared to the standard three to four hours from a typical notebook—a subnotebook gets even less—making it understandable why DMD is gung ho on the CE form factor.

These PC companion devices fulfill Canada Dry Delaware Valley's priorities in moving info from its field force to its back office. They're ultra-portable with many communication options, including wireless, which allows reps in the field to stay constantly connected to information and business processes.

**Going Live in a Hurry**

Dynamic Mobile Data began developing Canada Dry Delaware Valley's custom solution in September 1998 and went live just three months later. The initial rollout of the Windows CE-based technology was used by 65 sales representatives working in the greater Philadelphia area and several New Jersey counties adjacent to the Pennsylvania border.

DMD designed a solution in which handheld PCs transmit data to the MobileServer, a set of services designed by DMD that enables wireless field communications to reach the corporate office. The MobileServer resides on a Windows NT-based server at the Canada Dry Delaware Valley office in Pennsauken. After the data is received, it is automatically sent using file transfer protocol to a database residing on an AS/400 server that handles the overall order processing and accounting for the franchise. The newly deployed Windows CE system integrated so well with the franchise's existing IT infrastructure, LaRosa says, that the accounting

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department didn't notice a difference between entries from the field and local input.

On the hardware side, the company selected CONTACT, a handheld PC from Novatel Wireless. The 22-ounce CONTACT units are configured with 16 megabytes of RAM (random access memory), have integrated wireless CDPD modems and use PC LAN Cards for connecting to the corporate network. They are optimized for transmitting data over CDPD networks, reducing the amount of new software infrastructure necessary to deploy the solution. CONTACT uses the Wireless IP network, which is available in most metropolitan cities in the United States as well as some international markets.

Novatel has recently discontinued production of the CONTACT. However, two of its current products—Merlin and Sage—can offer companies similar communications capabilities.

### The Bottom Line

Since project implementation in late 1998, order processing at the Canada Dry Delaware Valley's franchise is more complete and current throughout the business day. However, some of the reps were not happy about the automated aspect of the new ordering process, notes Honickman Organization's Dolceamore. They preferred to retain control over placing orders. The company, however, felt that instant data transmission provided an easy situation for the majority of reps and one that was less apt to be affected by human error.

"One of the biggest benefits to this solution is that the Windows CE-based units automatically send an order over the wireless network after it's entered by the salesperson at the customer location," says Dolceamore. "There is no more waiting for the sales rep to send an order, which previously caused traffic jams in our order-receiving process. Since the orders are



The Itronix T5200 had to pinch-hit for the original Novatel CONTACT handheld after the model was discontinued.

automatically transmitted once they are entered by the salesperson, there's no delay before we can act on them.

"This way, we can dispatch orders to specific trucks starting early in the day. With the multitasking capabilities of the Windows CE system, this can even be done while a salesperson is still taking other orders. We strive to deliver all orders within a day, and this type of technology makes that possible. Also, the wireless network from Bell Atlantic opens up a wider territory than we had before, because many areas were previously out of range," adds Dolceamore.

Now that Phase One has been successfully deployed, Canada Dry Delaware Valley will undergo a few changes. The company is now testing e-mail functionality using Microsoft Exchange, which it plans to add to the pre-sales solution in the future. For now, the pre-sales solution is being deployed to hundreds of salespeople in its Pepsi, Perrier and Snapple distributorships. Also, Novatel's CONTACT will be replaced by the Itronix 5200, a ruggedized Windows CE unit with an integrated CDPD radio. Canada Dry Delaware Valley is already facing the challenge of today's technology—keeping pace. ☐

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