

case study



Carrefour Middle East improves productivity in 21 retail stores

NOTE: LXE's parent company, EMS Technologies, was acquired by Honeywell in August 2011.

Over the past 40 years, the Carrefour Group has grown to become the world's second-largest retailer and the largest in Europe. It operates four main grocery store formats: hypermarkets, supermarkets, hard discount stores and convenience stores. The Carrefour Group currently has over 15,500 stores, either company-operated or

franchises, and operates in 35 countries.

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In the Middle East, Carrefour operates in ten countries: Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Oman and Pakistan. Carrefour Middle East wished to increase the productivity and efficiency of these operations, enhance overall quality, improve competitiveness, and reduce errors by store personnel.

MX8 Provides Ideal RF Solution

Carrefour Middle East decided that implementing a radio frequency (RF) solution would enable all these goals to be realized. An initial RF project covering 15 hypermarkets and 6 supermarkets in Egypt, Kuwait and UAE was drawn up, with expansion to other countries planned for a later date.

Motorola, Datalogic and LXE were each considered for the RF project. "After carefully considering all the alternatives, we selected LXE as our RF system supplier," recalls Gavin Booth, Carrefour Middle East Back Office System Manager. "Their team was extremely experienced, they were working with an equally proficient partner, and followed up all our questions efficiently and quickly. And of course their products were excellent too!"

The LXE RF solution is based around the LXE MX8 hand-held computer, a small, light and economical hand-held data collection computer that is ideally suited for a broad range of supply chain tasks. "We were impressed by the MX8's competitiveness on all fronts, its overall design and ergonomics, and its proven durability," says Booth.

Smooth Installation

"The installation went efficiently, all the units functioned well, and the software

was implemented quickly and smoothly," adds Booth. "Printing customer invoices was slightly more complicated but because LXE had the right partner and resources, we were able to do this fairly quickly and efficiently."

In addition, the users of the MX8 computers quickly learned how to operate them, and soon came to appreciate the new technology, which they say makes their jobs easier and quicker.

Features and Benefits of the MX8



The MX8 includes a choice of two keypads:

- 32-key alpha-mode
- 32-key numeric triple-tap alpha.

Scanning options include a standard-range laser scanner, and 1D and 2D imagers. Backlit keys and a bright display deliver strong visibility, even in

dimly lit areas. During the initial implementation phase, MX8 hand-held devices were installed across various operations and are now successfully up and running.

The MX8 hand-held computers are used to scan items in the warehouse and retail areas of the stores. This information is then downloaded directly into the back-office legacy system, thus providing up-to-date inventory that is visible across all stores (and in the near future across all Carrefour stores in the region). The previous PC-based interface did not allow such transparency of information.

Now, if a specific item is absent from a particular store, personnel can immediately see which store has this item in stock. This dramatically improves customer service as well as inventory management.

Furthermore, the solution meets the increasing need in the retail industry for greater integration of logistics activities. Now, Carrefour's warehouses can be connected to their central logistics hub in Dubai. Instructions can be given centrally as to which products are to be bought in each country. Even warehouses not managed by Carrefour can be integrated into the network, enabling automated warehouse management.

"I was very pleased with LXE right from the start," adds Booth. "They recommended the right equipment, delivered it on time, and provided the right resources for us to accomplish our objectives. They also worked with an excellent partner with whom we had previously and successfully collaborated."

The legacy system used in Carrefour Middle East is an IBM I Series (formerly known as AS400) based on a Cisco

backbone. SYLANDE software controls distribution, labeling, merchandising and logistics activities. The hand-held part of the application was developed by international systems integrator WaveLogix using .Net technology. An application called InterForm is used to enable printing of Arabic characters.

Overall, the RF solution is resulting in better warehouse management, increased customer satisfaction and reduced operating costs. "All our operations have become more efficient and productive by using the LXE RF solution," says Booth.

Carrefour Middle East intends to expand the wireless LXE RF system. New stores are also due to be opened up soon – first and foremost in Iraq and Lebanon – where LXE's MX8 devices will be implemented right from day one.

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— Gavin Booth, Carrefour Middle East Back Office System Manager

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