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# CASE STUDY

# TEAMWORK, PERSISTENCE PAY OFF IN DEAL TO INSTALL INVENTORY-MANAGEMENT SOLUTION



*By Pedro Pereira*

It was the deal that almost got away. A department store chain in the New York metro area had decided to buy inventory-tracking handheld computers from a competitor of systems integrator tekservePOS. But through teamwork with data-capture solutions vendor CipherLab and multiple meetings with the customer, tekservePOS persuaded the retailer to change course. The result was a \$100,000 installation to manage inventory processes at the retailer's 100 locations.

tekservePOS deployed 120 CipherLab 8300 rugged handheld computers and a custom-written application to manage in-store receiving, markdowns, and out-of-stock items. "Prior to this solution, the customer had no integrated way to manage these processes and, instead, was managing them through a series of manual efforts and reports, along with disparate and old systems," says tekservePOS President John Pruban. The manual processes were time-consuming and prone to error.

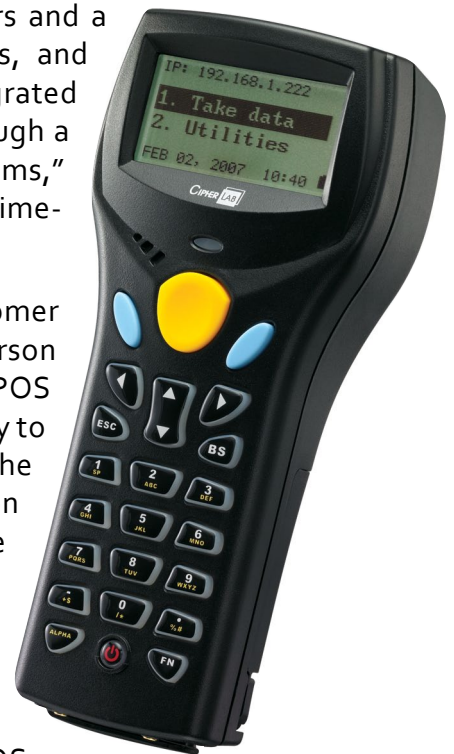
During a routine meeting at an industry conference in spring 2012, the customer mentioned plans to invest in a new system. tekservePOS, a 100-person systems integrator based in Hoffman Estates, IL, already provided POS (point of sale) systems to the retailer, so the integrator saw an opportunity to expand the relationship. The customer, however, had different plans. "The customer was going down a path of purchasing another hardware solution from Motorola and looking to another consultant to custom develop the application," Pruban says.

Pruban has been around long enough to know a deal isn't set until the dotted line is signed, so he knew he had a chance. He got in touch with CipherLab and, together, vendor and integrator started preparing a proposal for the customer. Through a series of joint sales calls, tekservePOS and CipherLab built their case. They studied the customer's needs, collected information on specs and requirements, and worked on the numbers to make the proposal attractive.

"The customer was fairly convinced they were on the right path, so there was some initial push-back," Pruban recalls. Eventually, though, after seeing demos of the CipherLab solution, which was less expensive and easy to use and install, the customer changed its mind.

## Deployment Takes Three Weeks

After winning the customer's approval, CipherLab wasted no time in getting the solution ready for deployment. In addition to deploying the 8300 handhelds, tekservePOS worked with CipherLab developers to write an application specific to the customer's inventory needs. The application, based on the CipherLab proprietary operating system, took five days to write.



CipherLab then shipped the 8300 units to the customer in two installments. The handhelds are single-purpose portable data terminals equipped with bar code scanners and keypads. Operating the scanners essentially comes down to pointing them at bar codes and pressing buttons, so they require no training. Deployment of the units was completed in about three weeks; they were in place by end of spring 2012.

Pruban says users took to the units quickly, realizing the new system would make life easier.

"Prior to this solution, store employees would average 100 hours a month or so to perform these tasks (such as tracking markdowns and out-of-stock items), but now they can be done in 20 hours," he says. Overall, he adds, the solution has saved the retailer "thousands of man-hours and likely savings in the hundreds of thousands. It has been described as a life saver from their previous approach."

The retailer hasn't provided Pruban with specific ROI metrics regarding the success of this new system, but he is confident the customer is pleased. For instance, as a result of this project, tekservePOS is working with the client on a future installation that will include installing a mobile label printer and the deployment of a fleet of CipherLab 8700 handhelds to automate additional inventory tasks. Pruban believes the future work has the potential to generate as much revenue as the 8300 installation — none of which would have happened without the persistent collaborative efforts of the tekservePOS and CipherLab teams.



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## ABOUT CIPHERLAB

[www.cipherlab.com](http://www.cipherlab.com)

CipherLab is a global leader in the design, manufacture, and marketing of Automatic Identification and Data Capture/Collection products and systems. The company's mobile computers and scanners are integrated into the networks of some of the world's best known logistics, retail, distribution, government installations and healthcare companies, helping them run more efficiently and effectively onsite and on the road. Operating worldwide, CipherLab is headquartered in Taipei, Taiwan with offices in China, Germany and the USA, and is publicly traded on the Taiwan stock exchange (Taiwan OTC: 6160).

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