

Datalogic Falcon X3 supports rapid growth at ABS Holdings - Datalogic

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OVERVIEW

As a leading omni-channel reseller, ABS Holdings runs a busy distribution operation from its Hampshire-based warehouse and head office. During a time of great change, in terms of the way people purchase goods of all kinds, the growth of e-commerce has helped the business to quadruple their turnover in a strikingly short space of time. However, this growth led the company's Commercial Director, Symon Reeves, to consider the health of the company's picking, packing and shipping operation as well as the technology that underpins it. ABS Holding's search for a solution began after the business outgrew their existing warehouse and moved to their current, larger unit.

THE CHALLENGE

Having experienced on-going connectivity problems at their old warehouse, an issue which saw handheld devices dropping their network connection on receiving orders from their ERP software, use of the existing system in the new premises degraded to the point of inactivity.

"The problem was extremely difficult to diagnose", explained Reeves, "It could occur on any handheld device and at any location on the warehouse floor. Once in the new warehouse, our order picking performance was a cause for concern, going from a constant stream of activity from 7am – 4pm to just one successful pick every 20 minutes."

Having used the legacy wireless network equipment and the same handheld terminal (HHT) units which were in use before the move, ABS Holdings were keen to solve the issue and opted to increase the wireless coverage by adding access points to the new warehouse infrastructure.

"We knew we needed a technology partner to help ensure our warehouse wireless was fit-for-purpose

and that our handhelds could cope with the volume of order picking and inventory management we were experiencing,” continues Reeves. It was at this point that ABS Holdings contacted Datalogic partner [Ensign Communications](#).

THE SOLUTION

After receiving the call from ABS Holdings, Ensign Communications' account manager, Justin Pender, began working closely with the business to help them correct their faltering warehouse infrastructure. However, despite efforts to relocate access points within the warehouse, the issue of handheld disconnectivity persisted. It was at this stage that Ensign recommended that ABS Holdings needed to consider a refresh of their end-of-life handheld estate as the next logical and necessary step in their warehouse transformation.



To start the selection process, Ensign Communications loaned a number of devices to ABS Holdings from a range of rugged handheld manufacturers including Datalogic. These handhelds offered the warehouse staff the full portfolio of possible features and form factors, such as screen types and sizes, touchscreens, various keyboard options and even PDA-style devices.

“Given the increased volume of shipping we were experiencing it was crucial to get this right,” states Reeves. “What we really liked was that, whilst onsite, Ensign's engineers really did look at what we were doing and how we were doing it, and really tried to understand our business operation before making any suggestions. They then came to us with a range of options that really fitted our needs.”

After just one week of the 4-week loan period, ABS Holdings' staff and management selected the Datalogic Falcon X3, preferring its combination of rugged ergonomic design, QWERTY keyboard and high-performance long range 2D imaging capabilities.

THE RESULTS

With the new Datalogic Handheld terminals in place and running perfectly alongside the re-positioned access point estate, the headaches for Symon and his staff were over and the business could get back to its normal levels of picking, packing and shipping.



The addition of Wavelink technology further streamlines the warehouse, enabling them to deploy software upgrades to their handheld terminal estate quickly and effectively, a process that was previously taking devices out-of-action for a number of hours each month.

“Ensign recognised that we were in pain and gave us a great deal of confidence from the beginning with their proactive and positive attitude. Since the completion of the work ABS Holdings have not experienced any of their previous issues. In closing, Reeves said, “We have taken the warehouse to a place it has never been – the system works perfectly.”

Steve Clapham, Sales Manager for T&L at Datalogic UK&I concludes, “Wireless connectivity is a vital component of any mobile computing solution installed inside the four walls of the warehouse. With enormous variances in productivity at stake, we are pleased that ABS Holdings were able to find a robust solution utilising the Falcon X3 and the services of our partner Ensign Communications.”

ABS Holdings