



Staying on Top with Fresh-Baked Ideas

Bridgford Retools DSD with Datamax-O'Neil's MicroFlash® 4te Printers staying on top with fresh-baked ideas ■ ■ ■



Next year Bridgford Foods Corporation will celebrate its 80th anniversary. The NASDAQ-traded company (BRID) traces its roots to Hugh H. Bridgford's meat market in San Diego, Calif.; it has long since evolved into one of the nation's most honored meatpacking and frozen foods manufacturing organizations. Today the company's headquarters are in Anaheim, Calif., with additional facilities in Dallas, Texas, Chicago, Ill., and Statesville, N.C. Through its nationwide direct store delivery (DSD) system, Bridgford delivers, stocks, and replenishes microwaveable sandwiches, luncheon meats, pepperoni, sausage, beef jerky, and baked goods to thousands of retail stores in all 50 states.

By early 2008, it had become clear that the company's success in the field was placing strain on certain elements of its DSD processing system, specifically its printers and handheld scanners. DecisionPoint Systems, Inc., a leading provider of field-based workforce automation solutions, was asked to address the situation. Dale Hetherington, Senior Account Manager for DecisionPoint, explains the problem the company faced and how Datamax-O'Neil's microFlash 4te printers solved it comprehensively.

Problem ■ ■ ■

"Bridgford was using old dot matrix printers, Okidata 390s, that had been in the field for more than a decade," begins Hetherington. "They were having a very

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- Dale Hetherington,
Senior Account Manager, DecisionPoint Systems, Inc.

difficult time getting these supported. They were also using an old DOS-based handheld model of Symbol Technologies, the PDT7500, and they could not get replacement parts for this. So we were called in to see if we could support their existing equipment, both the computers and the printers."

According to Hetherington, support proved to be just part of a more complex and more costly problem. "The printers had many breakage problems, so they were constantly shipping them to service centers and back again," he says. "These dot-matrix printers were hammering pins and ribbons through a multipart form, and this resulted in a lot of additional overhead."

Even worse, as drivers would print out the receipts for deliveries, they often found the quality of printing lacking. The imagers couldn't read the receipts, and it was difficult to load data into the system. Proof of delivery was hard to obtain; as a result, cash flow slowed and suffered.

Solution ■ ■ ■

Hetherington said it quickly became evident that Bridgford needed to transition to thermal printers, which were becoming the standard practice in the industry. "So I detailed to them why it was more costly to keep than



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right by our customers.

replace the dot matrix printers, as well as the old Symbol handhelds,” he explains:

- Service costs: Bridgford was incurring excessive shipping and service costs because of the lack of support for the products, their physical size, and the frequency with which they were breaking down.
- Material costs: The design of the dot-matrix printer meant that ribbons were exhausted and replaced on a regular basis, and the three-ply paper was expensive.
- Labor costs: The non-mobile printers had to be kept on trucks at the point of service, which made the process highly inefficient. Personnel would go into the store, do their work, scan in the details, return to the truck to print, then return to the store to deliver forms to the personnel on site.
- Financial costs: System performance was compromised by printer performance, making proof of delivery and entry of accounts receivable information more difficult to execute; therefore, the collections process slowed down and cost Bridgford accordingly.

“I put together a plan for Bridgford that would alleviate all these concerns, based on the Datamax-O’Neil microFlash® 4te printer,” says Hetherington. The 4te is engineered to withstand even the most punishing portable applications, including multiple 6-foot drops to concrete. It is ideal for the rigors of DSD service. The 4te also quickly, easily, and clearly prints quality 4-inch receipts, labels, and invoices for proof of delivery. It features enhanced processing speeds, high memory capacity, USB connectivity power status lights, external charging, and optional Bluetooth and 802.11b/g wireless connectivity. “This printer solved all the problems that Bridgford was facing, and provided a rapid return on investment,” says Hetherington.

Drivers could now carry the printer on their hips, increasing speed, adding mobility, and empowering them to make more store calls each day. Material replacement costs decreased dramatically. There were no ribbons to replace, and paper was markedly less expensive than the multi-part forms previously used.



The Fresh-Baked Idea Company®

Results ■ ■ ■

Based on DecisionPoint’s recommendation, Bridgford purchased 350 microFlash® 4te printers in early 2008. Within nine months, the printers had paid for themselves.

“The ROI was spectacular,” says Hetherington, “and it reoccurs. In the first three years since their deployment, the Datamax-O’Neil printers have paid for themselves six times over, a rate of return that I expect will improve even more over time.”

According to Hetherington, the printers Bridgford purchased were Bluetooth-enabled, and now they’re in the process of rolling out new Motorola MC9500 mobile computers. This should take Bridgford to the next level of DSD service, eliminating all cabling concerns, increasing speed, and keeping the company where it always has been: on top of their market.

“Bridgford bills itself as ‘The Fresh-Baked Idea Company,’” says Hetherington. “You can see why they’ve been successful. They’re not only baking up fresh ideas on their own, but they recognize other’s fresh ideas. That’s what happened in this instance, and I know that they’re glad they’ve become familiar with Datamax-O’Neil.