

Integrated Solutions and Datamax-O'Neil Collaborate to Meet Emerging Market Demand



featuring PrintPAD Integrated Printing System
field force automation ■ ■ ■

“How can you go wrong choosing the same Handheld technology that UPS uses, and a PrintPAD from the company that invented mobile printing?”

Winston-Salem, N.C.-based Integrated Solutions International (Integrated Solutions) is a systems integrator and software developer that specializes in field force automation. Field force automation includes both external personnel such as salespeople and delivery drivers, as well as internal staff including warehouse and retail personnel.

For nearly two decades, Integrated Solutions has been automating mobile workforces, enabling companies to maximize operational efficiency, increase productivity, and improve levels of customer satisfaction. “We’re involved in virtually everything related to mobility,” says Mike Sweeney, Vice President of Sales at Integrated Solutions. “Our clients range from Fortune 500 companies to small businesses, for which we provide key solutions including route accounting, field service, sales automation, and merchandising.”

One of the industry segments the company has been particularly close to is logistics providers: those involved in delivering goods. When UPS adopted a new mobile computer as their platform (Honeywell’s Dolphin 99EX), there was a groundswell in the industry to move towards this platform and incorporate a PrintPAD that worked with it. Unfortunately, the PrintPAD didn’t exist, and interest in developing a new PrintPAD had waned.

Problem ■ ■ ■

“Customers used to be concerned that PrintPADs were tied to a specific device,” says Sweeney. Because of the pace of mobile device development, companies were loath to get tied into hardware that could rapidly prove obsolete. Ironically, these same customers were clamoring for a PrintPAD to be tied to a device—the Dolphin 99EX.

“When we showed companies this device, they loved it because of its groundbreaking capabilities and that UPS had made it their standard,” Sweeney explains. “Honeywell designed this device to be available for purchase for seven years, and serviced for an additional five years thereafter. This was unheard of in our industry, and customers liked the idea that this product was

“The development of this product shows their flexibility and how they’ve remained responsive as they’ve grown and changed over time. That’s important for us in meeting our customers’ needs. With this product, Datamax-O’Neil has improved the PrintPAD concept.”

***- Mike Sweeney, Vice President, Sales
Integrated Solutions International, LLC***



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guaranteed to be around a long time. UPS is deploying over 100,000 of these units, IT directors of logistics providers aren’t going to lose their jobs for using the same technology that UPS is using!”

But there was a lingering problem: all these customers had used PrintPADs in the past. They liked PrintPADs and wanted to know when a PrintPAD was going to come out for the Dolphin 99EX. However, there weren’t any on the drawing boards. “Our customers have been using PrintPADs for years,” says Sweeney. “They weren’t going to give them up easily.”



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right by our customers.

Tom Stopyra Vice President of Engineering at Integrated Solutions explains they had specified PrintPAD solutions for years because of its platform design, with the printer on one side and the cradle on the other, which reduced complexity from a logistics perspective.

“The printer and the handheld can be charged with one truck charger or one home charger, so there’s fewer pieces to handle,” Stopyra says. “It’s a tight, clean package for the end user. While many people say the PrintPAD costs more than a printer, when you look at the total solution (i.e., an integrated PrintPAD versus a printer, a handheld, a cradle, and charging equipment), the PrintPAD is less expensive.”

At a time when many thought PrintPADs had become passé, a strong, new need emerged.

Solution ■ ■ ■

Integrated Solutions turned to Datamax-O’Neil and asked them to build a PrintPAD. Sweeney says he needed to be persistent in his approach, as Datamax-O’Neil was well aware that the industry had shown diminished interest in PrintPADs because of the concern that they tied into technology that could become rapidly obsolete.

“Because of the platform decision by UPS and the seven-year life cycle, the traditional argument against PrintPADs evaporated,” says Sweeney. “We pointed out that this combination would be unique: no one else had a ultra-rugged mobile computer with a PrintPAD solution; eventually they became as excited about it as we were.” As Stopyra put it “How can you go wrong choosing the same Handheld technology that UPS uses, and a PrintPAD from the company that invented mobile printing?”

According to Sweeney, Datamax-O’Neil has improved the PrintPAD concept for what he calls “the UPS unit.” Previously, when the handheld was in the PrintPAD dock, it would talk to the printer via a direct connection. Now all the PrintPADs have Bluetooth.

“So the PrintPAD can be mounted in the truck; when the driver walks up to the truck to fulfill an order, they can automatically print without a hard connection,” says Sweeney. “From that perspective, having Bluetooth integrated into the PrintPAD gives them more use cases - and greater value.”

The new PrintPAD units also incorporate card readers that speed up and simplify tasks such as Credit Card payments and Driver’s License reading. “Datamax-O’Neil also developed the ‘e-charge,’” says Sweeney. “This is ideal for mounting and charging units. There are three metal contacts on the back of the PrintPAD, so when the user drops it into the mounting bracket it automatically charges. You don’t have to physically plug a charger into the print pad when you mount it in the truck.”



Results ■ ■ ■

Sweeney says that the new PrintPADs are selling like proverbial hotcakes. “The first 250 were sold within six weeks,” he says. “We expect to sell about 6,000 Dolphin 99EX mobile computers with PrintPADs over the next six to 18 months. The initial users are fairly similar, with applications involving delivery.” Whether to retail or homes, many will take the PrintPAD directly to the customer (e.g., scan product off the truck, take the PrintPAD to the customer, collect a signature, print an Invoice or Receipt, provide it to the customer, and move on to the next one). They will also use it to print other documents such as DOT and End Of Day reports.

“We’ve been working with Datamax-O’Neil since the inception of our company,” notes Sweeney. “The development of this product shows their flexibility and how they’ve remained responsive as they’ve grown and changed over time. That’s important for us in meeting our customers’ needs.”

Something, Sweeney says, you can print.

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