

## Socket Wireless Connectivity Solution Delivers On-Road Invoicing and Product Orders for Deli Meats

*"The system has reduced our cost of delivery, which is critical in our competitive market space, improves our customer service and allows us to offer our customers more competitive pricing."*

*Martin Walsh, Managing Director  
Deli Meats*





Every lunch hour, thousands of hungry workers in Ireland rush to grab a sandwich loaded with roast beef, ham, or other cold cuts supplied by Deli Meats. Founded in 1980, the Dublin-based company distributes fresh food products to convenience stores, petrol station forecourts, and deli counters, and is the largest supplier of deli products to the Leinster region of Ireland. Among its many customers are Spar, Ireland's largest chain of retail food stores, and Centra, Ireland's leading chain of convenience stores, each with hundreds of shops nationwide.

*After only its first year of deployment, the new system was so successful that delivery agents were able to double the number of transactions they completed each day.*

Deli Meats was looking for a way to increase operational efficiency, reduce costs, and better manage stock in transit. Because the product in question is food, some with a shelf life as low as one day, efficient inventory management is a major concern for the company.

Deli Meats needed a solution that would enable them to perform invoicing and take orders on the road and in real time, and to efficiently communicate these orders back to the head office. The objective was to eliminate paperwork, cradles and cables, and to get clearer visibility on the stock control.

The food distributor turned to Computer Control Solutions Limited, a provider of complete mobile computer solutions to the food, fuel, utilities, secu-

riety, field service and maintenance industries. Computer Control Solutions equipped Deli Meats delivery agents with a cutting-edge system that combines the latest in mobile computing and wireless technology to automate the capture, delivery, payment and fulfillment of orders on the road. After only its first year of deployment, the new system was so successful that delivery agents were able to double the number of transactions they completed each day.

### A COMPLETE MOBILE SOLUTION

The handheld component consists of a HP iPAQ h6340 Pocket PC with built-in *Bluetooth* and GPRS. Running on the Pocket PC is OutTrak software from Computer Control Solutions, which electronically processes all orders, delivery dockets, and invoices with no manual calculations or paperwork. Customer signatures for PODs (Proofs of Delivery) and order authorizations are captured directly on the Pocket PC screen.

Anchored inside the van is an OKI Microline 280 dot matrix printer equipped with the Socket Cordless Serial Adapter with *Bluetooth* Wireless Technology, which enables the printer to receive data from the Pocket PC wirelessly within a range of 10 meters/30 feet. The small adapter connects to a standard 9-pin serial port and can provide *Bluetooth* wireless technology to a wide variety of electronic equipment.

Using the Socket Cordless Serial Adapter enables Deli Meats delivery agents to print documents with-

out having to enter the van and dock the Pocket PC into a cradle. This helps drivers save precious time while delivering inventory.

While interacting with customers in the field, delivery agents can print route sheets, invoices, sales orders, stock transactions, received payments and end-of-day reports in real time with the most accurate and up-to-the-minute information. Printouts are done on standard A4 paper, providing customers with a professional level of documentation directly at the point of delivery.

*Using the Socket Cordless Serial Adapter enables drivers to print documents without having to enter the van and dock the Pocket PC to a cradle. This helps drivers save precious time while delivering inventory.*

Once a delivery is completed, an agent moves onto the next assignment, while the Pocket PC automatically contacts the office over the GPRS cellular network with the transaction details and a copy of the signed POD. Compression minimizes the file size and reduces the cost of transmission. When transaction information reaches the main office, it is automatically sent into the back office accounting database and posted to the sales ledger. PODs are stored for easy retrieval and distribution.

While drivers are away transporting product to customers, supervisors can monitor delivery and order activity from the main office in real time. "Using the OutTrak Dashboard, I can see at a glance the progress of the agent throughout the day, his onboard stock/cash and capture his next day requirements, no more waiting on dockets back or phone calls for amendments," explained Cormack Dowd, Distribution Manager of Deli Meats.

## ELIMINATING PAPERWORK

In the past, Deli Meats relied on a pen, paper and fax based tracking system that required repetitive order entry and phone communication to manage stock and sales order information. Following the implementation of the combined solution of OutTrak software and the Socket Cordless Serial Adapter, the new system has automated mundane paperwork and repetitive tasks, freeing up human resources to focus on best serving their customers.

With no daily reports to write or timesheets to fill out, Deli Meats delivery agents can now complete 30-40 transactions per day, twice the number they could previously handle. The Socket Cordless Serial Adapter has provided Deli Meats reliable connectivity even with the increased productivity.

Additionally, the system allows the food distributor to significantly increase (22%) the delivery capacity of its van delivery fleet. For every six vans needed to complete all routes in the past, they now only need five.

## ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION AT THE POINT OF DELIVERY

By keeping the order electronic until the final point of delivery, any changes and returns can be incorporated into the final printed documentation. This eliminates the need for any further administration back at headquarters.

Providing customers with accurate documentation directly at the point of delivery improves the likelihood of early payment, eliminates the cost of



*Above: Deli Meats delivery van.*



*Right: A delivery agent sends a document wirelessly to the printer anchored inside the van.*

"Once the solution is implemented, the ROI is extremely quick, and there is never any discussion about reverting back to a manual paper system."

Shane Boyle, Implementation Manager  
Computer Control Solutions



separately delivering the paperwork (including administration and postage), and increases the speed of order fulfillment.

"By giving accurate documentation at the point of delivery, debtors' days have reduced by 3-5 days, credit note claims have reduced by 90%, and requests for POD and copy invoices by 80%. By reducing the cost of the delivery process, Deli Meats can share these savings with their customer base by offering more competitive pricing," explained Shane Boyle, Implementation Manager of Computer Control Solutions.

"By giving more accurate documentation, they have improved their customer service and have grown their business substantially in the last year," he added.

### COMPANY-WIDE IMPACT

Implementing the new technology required many changes throughout the company's operations, which resulted in dramatic improvements in productivity and substantial cost savings.

"For the customer to implement this type of solution, it is a disruptive technology, as it cuts across all functions of the business — finance, sales, operations, and the field agents — upsetting everyone. However, once the solution is implemented, the ROI is extremely quick, and there is never any discussion about reverting back to a manual paper system," Boyle remarked.

In the future, Boyle predicts more businesses like Deli Meats implementing mobile technology solutions. "We see more and more supply chain players using this technology to take unnecessary costs out of the system, improving response times for retailers and sharing these savings to give the customer a better deal at the cash desk," he said.



#### Customer at a glance

- Organization: Deli Meats
- Founded: 1980
- Headquarters: Dublin, Ireland
- Primary business: Food distributor

#### Partner at a glance

- Organization: Computer Control Solutions
- Founded: 1994
- Headquarters: Dublin, Ireland
- URL: [www.outtrak.com](http://www.outtrak.com)
- Primary business: Provider of mobile computer solutions

### CHALLENGE

Perform invoicing and take orders on the road in real time and have provide better visibility of stock in transit

### SOLUTION

- Socket Cordless Serial Adapter with *Bluetooth* Wireless Technology
- HP iPAQ h6340 Pocket PC with built-in *Bluetooth* and GPRS capability
- OutTrak software from Computer Control Solutions
- OKI Microline 280 dot matrix printer



### RESULTS

- Delivery agents doubled their number of transactions per day
- Delivery capacity of the van fleet increased 22%
- Debtors' days reduced by 3-5 days, credit note claims reduced by 90% and requests for POD and copy invoices decreased by 80%
- Eliminating paperwork for field staff reduces delivery costs and allows them to focus on customer service
- Headquarters has a real-time view of stock, cash, and activities on the road



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