



Unopiù simplifies warehouse management with BlackBerry solution

Unopiù is the leading provider of outdoor furnishings in Europe with 33 showrooms across Italy, France, Spain and Germany. The company also markets its products in Israel, Russia, Morocco, Dubai, the United States and across the world through franchises, and online, through its web store.

The Challenge

Unopiù's headquarters are near the town of Viterbo, in Italy, with 33 branches in Italy and abroad. To manage and monitor incoming and outgoing stock from its warehouses, the company relied on a system that used RF (radio frequency) bar code scanners. It meant that the warehouse had to be equipped with a wireless access point based network, making it impossible to use beyond the company's own warehouses. When products were transferred to showrooms or trade shows, Unopiù's employees were required to keep track of the stock and manually update information on the company's server.

Furthermore, the RF bar code scanners were rather large and not very handy to carry around. The radio frequency terminals had also become obsolete and needed to be replaced, which would have been costly.

The Solution

A few years back Unopiù deployed BlackBerry® smartphones together with the BlackBerry® Enterprise Server to keep its managers and branch managers always connected and available by email. In addition, for its showrooms the company decided on BlackBerry smartphones rather than on fixed-line telephony.

Key Benefits

- Real-time access to stock information
- 50% cost savings over previous solution
- Simple, efficient and practical
- Seamless communication both in and out of the warehouse



Having identified the need to improve its stock management operations, at the beginning of 2011 Unopiù decided to extend the use of BlackBerry smartphones to warehouse operators in charge of logistics.

Using an application developed by TC Data, a member of the BlackBerry® Alliance program, all forty warehouse operators have been equipped with a bar code scanner that resembles a wristwatch, so small that it can be worn comfortably all day, connected via Bluetooth to an associated BlackBerry smartphone which is in continuous communication with the company servers.

Warehouse operators can now read product bar codes through the scanners on their wrists. The data is then immediately sent via BlackBerry to the company server.

The Benefits

With the implementation of this solution, Unopiù logistics managers can now use the bar code scanners not only within the company's warehouses, but wherever they may need to, from stores to trade shows. Incoming and outgoing stock data can be updated directly on the company server from anywhere in the world. Stock inventory, previously performed manually at each site, is now completely automated and quickly available, ensuring fast and accurate access to current stock levels and product availability. Furthermore, the company server and corporate data is now accessible directly from the BlackBerry smartphones, enabling operators to keep track of the warehouse stock situation at all times.

Providing BlackBerry smartphones to warehouse operators also meant providing access to their email and being able to reach them at any time. This is a great benefit for the company as it can send all required information to operators without having to physically locate the operators within the warehouse.

According to Alessandro Milani, head of Information Systems at Unopiù, "the seamless use of the solution in spring and summer, peak seasons in the outdoor furnishing market sector, has proven that the project has been a success."

The BlackBerry solution is also very simple to use; no training was required for the employees involved since the warehouse management system is very intuitive, easy to use and perfectly integrated with their workflow processes.

Since the implementation of the BlackBerry solution, and the wrist scanners, the company has reduced the investment required to replace its radio frequency bar code scanners by 50%. In addition to this major cost saving, Unopiù has implemented a more efficient warehouse management system that enables operators to work with free hands, achieving considerable time savings and most importantly, the security of constantly and immediately updated systems and stock information.



"The seamless use of the solution has proven that the project has been a success."

Alessandro Milani
Information Systems
Unopiù

Industry:
Manufacturing

Region:
Italy

Company Size:
Medium

Solution:
BlackBerry® smartphones
BlackBerry® Enterprise Server
Scanner application from TC Data

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