

Case study

## Buffalo Rock



At a glance

Industry: Consumer Goods

Application: DSD

### Speed and Accuracy Equal Success for Bottler

With 600 routes to roll out over 13 distribution centers in Alabama, Florida and Georgia, the task of updating its mobile delivery application was a daunting task for soft drink bottler Buffalo Rock. But six months later, with all divisions up and running, the nation's largest single-family, privately-owned, Pepsi-Cola bottler is reaping the benefits.

Mike Cairnes, Buffalo Rock's Birmingham Administrative Manager, is impressed with the results since the company replaced its mobile application and handhelds. "It's faster and the drivers don't have to mess with the handhelds so much, which means they can spend more time focusing on the customer."

The AL-based bottler that services a population of more than 5 million, decided to update its mobile application last year after a series of break downs. Kenneth McClain, Project Manager with Buffalo Rock was charged with the task of rolling out the new mobile package over the company's 13 divisions. "It was time to update equipment," explained McClain. "We were using the 4500

Norand (now Intermec) handhelds, which we had been using for years and years and they needed to be replaced."

Already using GBG's route accounting system (RAS) SDMS, Buffalo Rock chose GBG's mobile delivery application, Pocket RouteXpress. "Pocket RouteXpress seemed a good application to combine with the Intermec 740 handhelds we had chosen," McClain said.

RouteXpress is a conventional sales and pre-sold delivery mobile application designed for Pocket PC devices. It is used as the primary tool for all route accounting activities in a sales and/or delivery environment.

Converting 13 divisions and training all the drivers was no easy task for McClain. "Pocket RouteXpress involves a little more computer experience for the route drivers because there are more options," explained McClain, in speaking to the former dos-based handhelds. "But it was really easy to train them. We were able to do a quick two to three-hour course with the drivers and let them use it the next day."

McClain continued, "It was a much, much better, easier, smoother rollout than anything we've done before," he noted, six months following the first installation. "It has been a very good application for us."

Since installing RouteXpress, McClain and Buffalo Cairnes have noticed a marked improvement in the delivery process. In particular, McClain explained RouteXpress together with the Intermec 740 handhelds have streamlined the transfer of data. "Speed has improved. Uploads and downloads used to take up to 45 minutes per route and have now been cut down to 10 minutes, tops. In many cases this has led to increased productivity for our settlement people who are now able to complete their day earlier," he added.

Cairnes particularly likes the intuitive design of Pocket RouteXpress. "If you don't know a customer or a product, you

can look it up easily; the drivers would have problems before. For example, if they didn't know a product code they were calling into the office. Or if they didn't know a customer they would call in to have somebody find it for them," Cairnes said. "And in some cases they wouldn't work the stop," he added. "That led to missed sales."

RouteXpress is also more forgiving, noted Cairnes. "With RouteXpress, users have the ability to edit invoices and make corrections rather than having to re-enter the whole invoice over again. That has saved them a lot of time."

GBG's Mobile Broker communication gateway is also more robust than Buffalo Rock's former application, users like the new built in fail-safes. "Once you learn RouteXpress, it's much faster and has a lot more functions. For example, if the download to the handheld isn't ready, RouteXpress will keep trying the

download until it completes. So you don't have to monitor it so closely."

McClain particularly likes the compact flash cards. "All the route information is stored here. If something happens to a handheld, the driver can pull out the card, place it in another handheld and keep on going," he said. "Before, if anything happened to the handheld, the driver would have to re-key all the information," McClain added.

The Intermec 740 handhelds along with the PW40 printers are also a plus, noted Cairnes. "The drivers have commented that printing invoices is much faster now."

All these additional features have served to make the drivers' jobs easier and helped to reconcile accounting variances. McClain was also happy with GBG's Professional Services implementation team. "The team at GBG was very cooperative and quick to get us answers."

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