

Philip Morris



At a glance

Industry: CPG

Application: Sales Distribution & Invoice Printing

Product: 760 mobile computer and PB40 portable printer

Philip Morris Uses Intermec Mobile Computers and Printers for Efficient Sales Management

In 1998, Philip Morris Singapore was established to sell and distribute tobacco products to licensed tobacco retailers in the country. To ensure that all retailers are given the best service and logistical support, the company established a direct sales model for better control of sales and delivery.

As an early adopter of technology, Philip Morris embarked on a pilot wireless payment project with the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA), Starhub, HCS Solutions Pte Ltd and IBM in 2002, to bring wireless payments to the heartlanders. Philip Morris selected Intermec 760 wireless handheld computers and Intermec PB40 printers for this project and continued to use these Intermec devices as part of their sales management system after the project has been completed.

The mobile Intermec PB40 direct-thermal receipt printer is small, lightweight, durable and weather resistant. Made from resilient high-density polyethylene, the tough device can withstand the most challenging environment and applications, and continue to function on a full eight-hour shift. It offers exceptional print clarity,

supports both 40-column and compressed 80-column formats, along with the versatility of printing graphics, bar codes and logos, to print standard and bar-coded receipts. In addition PB40 is equipped with automatic power saving sleep mode and quick three-hour recharging time, along with an optional vehicle charger. These functional and reliable features enable Philip Morris mobile workforce to travel on the road the entire day with ease.

When paired with an Intermec 700 Series mobile computer, the Intermec PB40 offers a hassle-free, convenient and wireless printing solution for the sales representatives. With the PB40 worn at the waist, sales representatives need not return to the van to print receipts, invoices or proof of delivery, as it can be done while they are on the move.

Each morning, 43 sales representatives arrive at the warehouse to collect goods packed for them by the warehouse team the day before. The warehouse team prepares the stock based on past sales records collected by the Intermec 760 handheld computer. Packing the right quantity stock reduces unnecessary weight in the vans and minimizes the time and

cost of making trips back to the warehouse within the same day to replenish stock. Besides churning out the sales call pick lists, the system produces a route list with customers' names, addresses, payment terms and sales patterns for the day for the sales representatives to simplify sales calls and deliveries.

The sales representatives make their rounds to each of their sales territories across the island. Philip Morris customer outlets range from small outfits like "mom and pop" provision stores, coffee shops and canteens in construction sites, to retail chains and mega-stores like 7-Eleven and Carrefour respectively.

Armed with the Intermec 760 handheld computer, each sales representative visits his or her customer with full confidence of providing the correct quantity of inventory and full knowledge of past purchasing patterns. After checking the stocks at the outlets, sales representatives can recommend the optimum quantity to purchase based on historical sales patterns, and introduce products to retailers based on market demands.

Paired with the Intermec PB40 portable printer worn at their waist, the sales representative can immediately account for each order, by printing a proof of sales on the spot with details such as purchase date, time, and retailer information captured. At the end of the workday, while the sales representatives drive back to the warehouse, all sales transactions are automatically compiled into a sales report, reflecting accurately the exact quantity delivered and sold.

"Many of our sales representatives are in their 40s and early 50s, with no IT knowledge, and yet they can easily use the Intermec 760 mobile computers and Intermec PB40 printers effectively with just minimal training. The devices are very user friendly, with buttons and screens of a comfortable size, and very reliable," said Mr. Peter Low, Assistant Manager, Sales Information & Reporting, Philip Morris. "We have used the same Intermec units since 2002 and have yet to encounter major problems. For the occasional breakdowns, we were able to turn to friendly and reliable support from Intermec experts."

Philip Morris conducted an exercise to test the impact of the Intermec devices on the workers' productivity. Seven sales representatives were selected and the results were revealing. As the product discount matrix is rather complex, manual calculation leads to many errors such as overcharging or undercharging. On the average, each sales representative needs to spend two additional hours each day at work to finish what they used to complete much faster when they could use the Intermec mobile computers and printers.

Without the Intermec devices, the salesmen return to office late, sales reports will be less accurate, and more time has to be spent on audit checks and corrections. Intermec devices have demonstrated how critical they are for saving time and enhancing productivity for the workflow at Philip Morris.

**North America
Corporate Headquarters**

6001 36th Avenue West
Everett, Washington 98203
Phone: (425) 348-2600
Fax: (425) 355-9551

**North Latin America
Headquarters Office**

Mexico
Phone: +52 55 52-41-48-00
Fax: +52 55 52-11-81-21

**South Latin America
Headquarters Office**

Brazil
Phone: +55 11 5502.6770
Fax: +55 11 5502.6780

**Europe/Middle East &
Africa Headquarters Office**

Reading, United Kingdom
Phone: +44 118 923 0800
Fax: +44 118 923 0801

**Asia Pacific
Headquarters Office**

Singapore
Phone: +65 6303 2100
Fax: +65 6303 2199

Internet

www.intermec.com
Worldwide Locations:
www.intermec.com/locations

Sales

Toll Free NA: (800) 934-3163
Toll in NA: (425) 348-2726
Freephone ROW:
00 800 4488 8844
Toll ROW: +44 134 435 0296

OEM Sales

Phone: (425) 348-2762

Media Sales

Phone: (513) 874-5882

**Customer Service
and Support**

Toll Free NA: (800) 755-5505
Toll in NA: (425) 356-1799



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