

MEM Retail Marketing Services

MEM goes wireless on the shop floor

The sharp end of shopping

As with any point-of-sale (PoS) marketing campaign the collection of data and reports for both internal use and clients is an important job, not only to control the business but to demonstrate effective use of budget. Field agents evaluating such projects spend the majority of the time on-site and away from the office, often working with laborious paper-based processes. With the introduction of advanced technology solutions and access to the Internet, marketing services companies have the opportunity to revolutionise their businesses.

MEM is a UK-based marketing service agency offering consumer brand management solutions to distributors, agents, retail chains and brand owners across the country. Services include in-store merchandising and promotions, leaflet drops, audits and stock counts. The business realised it could improve the way it managed sales and service representatives and the collection of PoS merchandising data. In doing so this would help to eliminate time consuming paper-based tasks and achieve higher accountability among its field representatives.

The admin headache

MEM merchandises and services over 1000 retail locations across the UK. In order to manage the huge number of client displays MEM employs both a field management team and merchandisers to re-stock and maintain the client shelves. Previously each team used manual and paper-based processes for each visit, recording data and key information about each individual retail location.

Every night hundreds of paper forms were either posted or faxed back to a central office for analysis and review. Often the forms contained errors, were illegible or in a worst case scenario inaccurately completed. This meant the senior management teams had a difficult task in accurately performing analysis of the data both internally and for the clients.

'MEM is saving thousands of pounds each year by using the MDP software in conjunction with the O₂ Xda II handheld device. The software has enabled MEM to automate many of the paper-based functions reducing costs and providing management and clients with actionable data from the field. Completing these activities on the O₂ Xda II gets them done faster giving us better information about what's going on in the field.'

'By eliminating manual and paper-based processes MEM has achieved a 300% ROI within the first year of implementation.'

Tony Jones, Technical Director, MEM Retail Services Ltd

Primary business

Media and Leisure

Vertical market

Retail Services

Business need

MEM needed a better way to manage sales and service representatives and collect PoS merchandising data

The solution

- MobileDataPro software (MDP)
- O₂ Xda II

Business benefits

- Elimination of paper based processes
- Enhanced data for decision making
- Employee accountability
- Increased revenue





The solution...

MEM realised it needed to source and implement a flexible and easy-to-use system to allow merchandisers and regional managers to capture data on-site.

Extensive research was carried out to find software which could be hosted remotely on a handheld device and customised to meet MEM's business needs. At the time O2 was the only manufacturer to offer a PDA, the O2 Xda II, providing the flexibility for customised software to be loaded onto it and seamlessly integrated with the device's own functionality.

Paperless systems, enhanced decision making

After reviewing its options, MEM chose to implement MobileDataPro (MDP) without the need for any proprietary hardware.

The MDP software replaced the paper based collection process with electronic versions of these forms. Merchandisers can now complete the sales and merchandising activities quickly in the store by using the O2 Xda II stylus.

Once the data has been captured, each representative synchronises their information to the central database via a GPRS Data connection or by using the PDA cradle in combination with their computer's internet connection. Once synchronised, the data is instantly available for reporting purposes, eliminating the need for re-keying, reducing associated costs and improving quality.

One of the biggest advantages to the MDP software is the power to create new forms or update existing ones which can be deployed in the field within minutes. Field agents receive an alert to synchronise their O2 Xda II in order to upload the new form.

MEM can now run on-the-fly reports down to the end-user level and perform stock ordering for clients either by sending an alert to a manager or generating an urgent purchase order for that location. The combination of O2's device and the MDP software has provided such a powerful tool that MEM will be taking the product to market in April 2006.



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O2 (UK) Limited, 260 Bath Road,
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Registered Office as above.
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Correct at time of issue (January 2006)