

CASE STUDY

Citizens de Mexico SA deploys jLAN Mobile Sales

Mobile Access to Inventory Data Reduces
Back Orders by 25%, Order Entry Errors by
50% and Decreases Shipping Time by 60%



CITIZEN®

OVERVIEW

Citizen de Mexico S.A. de C.V. manufactures and distributes innovative and stylish watches and other products to customers throughout Mexico. Citizen's mobile account executives did not have access to up-to-date information on pricing, inventory and account status while making sales calls at customer sites. Popular items were often out of stock by the time orders were entered. Because orders were rekeyed into the back office system, there was a high amount of order entry and data errors. Citizen's retail customers were unsure they would have the stock that customers wanted when they needed it.

Furthermore, Citizen could not be sure their account executives were offering customers accurate contract pricing and discounts. To solve these issues, Citizen deployed a mobile sales solution from jLAN Technologies that connects users with current data from their ERP system, Microsoft Dynamics™ GP. Since deployment, the amount of sales tied up in back orders has fallen by 25%, data entry errors have been reduced by 50% and product shipping time has improved by 60%. Citizen's account executives can now provide their customers with real-time inventory levels and orders can be shipped in hours instead of days.

"Within a few months of implementing jLAN Mobile, the number of back orders dropped dramatically. That is more than US \$300,000 straight to the bottom line."

Francisco Villacian Graupera, Citizens de Mexico S.A

Industry:

Consumer Electronics

Customer Profile:

Citizen de Mexico S.A. is the Mexican licensee, manufacturer and distributor of Citizen brand watches. The company offers customers innovative watches through its retail and wholesale distribution network throughout Mexico.

Business Problem:

Success for Citizen depends on account executives developing more meaningful relationships with their customers. Citizen wanted to give its account executives in the field near real-time access to critical business data including inventory, pricing and customer account information that currently resides in their ERP system.

Solution:

Citizen selected jLAN Technologies, a Microsoft Gold Partner, to deploy a mobile sales solution that seamlessly connects with their ERP system, Microsoft Dynamics GP.

Benefits:

- Reduced Back Orders
- Fewer Order Entry Errors
- Faster Order-to-Cash Cycle
- More Timely Product Delivery
- Improved Customer Relationships

Business Problem

Since 1930, Citizen has been an innovator of watch technologies including the introduction of the world's first ruggedized, electronic, titanium and solar watches. Citizen de Mexico has held the exclusive rights to distribute Citizen brand watches in Mexico since the 1960's.

Citizen markets its products through an expansive network of distributors and retailers throughout Mexico. Each year, the company introduces new product lines that are manufactured and sold alongside traditional styles and models. Depending upon the year, approximately 10% of its product line is new every season.

When account representatives visit customers, it is their responsibility to show them new models. Account executives also need to place replenishment orders, review account status and discuss current pricing, promotions and inventory levels with the buyers. However, with no access to updated information in the companies' ERP system at headquarters, account executives lacked the necessary tools to efficiently sell and place product orders for customers.

"Citizen realized that its Enterprise Resource Planning system, Microsoft Dynamics GP, was more than capable of handling these issues in the back office. However, the information was trapped in the back office and not visible to their field sales team," stated Andy Link, President of jLAN Technologies, Inc.

This lack of real-time information caused many items that customers had ordered to go on back order from suppliers. Francisco Villacian Graupera of Citizen de Mexico S.A. estimated that, on average, \$300,000 worth of stock was on back order at any given time. Also, depending on an account executive's access to faxes and telephones in Mexico's remote areas, it could take anywhere from four hours to a week for an order to reach Citizen.

Back orders were extremely frustrating to both Citizen and its customers. For Citizen, back orders meant the potential for lost sales opportunities and damaged relationships with valued distribution and retail partners. For their partners, it meant not only lost sales but also the potential loss of loyal customers because of their inability to accurately plan inventory levels for their retail operations.



"We had all this information locked in our Dynamics GP system," said Graupera. "The challenge for us was to efficiently disseminate this information to our sales representatives dispersed throughout the country."

Graupera added, "Another challenge we faced was credibility with the system. We had previously deployed mobile technology to our sales team. However, because orders were often lost, our customer pricing or inventory quantity information was incorrect. As a result, it was crucial that we rebuild credibility with our sales team so that they have confidence in the data accuracy on the mobile device."

".. backorders have been reduced by 25% in only 8 months."

The Solution

Citizen evaluated a number of technology solutions in an effort to find a mobile sales force solution that met their unique business needs. Citizen wanted to give its account executives in the field a robust, simple-to-use mobile solution that would work seamlessly with Microsoft Dynamics GP to show changes in pricing, stock availability and customer details on a near-real-time basis.

"Citizen needed a mobile solution that our sales force could take with them anywhere," stated Graupera. "We wanted to give them access to our inventory on hand by warehouse location, ability to display product images on the mobile device and access to customer account information to confirm the customer's credit status. In addition, the ability to have orders go directly into Dynamics without any manual intervention via barcode scanning was crucial to streamlining order processing efficiency."

CASE STUDY



Ultimately, Citizen chose a mobile sales and route accounting solution from jLAN Technologies because it offered all the functionality they needed along with a proven integration path into their existing Dynamics GP infrastructure. The system was built end to end on Microsoft technologies which enabled the solution to grow with them as their business expands.

Citizen had been a long standing customer of Dynamics GP. The accounting, purchasing, and other administrative departments were comfortable working within Microsoft Dynamics GP. "We know that customers spend a lot of time and effort working with their back office system," stated Link. "The idea is to allow the back office staff to continue to work in a familiar environment and simply leverage that data out to mobile devices. As a result, you see much higher adaptation of the mobile technology and ultimately, a much higher ROI."

The jLAN mobile solution is built using the Microsoft .NET Compact Framework and eConnect; therefore, it integrates seamlessly with Microsoft Dynamics. Using Microsoft SQL Server technologies provides mobile users access to enterprise resource planning data whenever and wherever they need it.

"jLAN Mobile gives us the ability to view customer account statuses and collect payments on a mobile device. As a result, jLAN Mobile has reduced our days outstanding receivable from 45 days to 40 days, greatly increasing corporate cash flow."

Citizen Orders Local Customization

"We were very excited and privileged to have been chosen by Citizen to implement a route accounting and mobile sales solution," stated Link. "However, we also knew that we had an important challenge ahead of us to localize the entire application for the Mexican market."

jLAN was able to meet the localization challenge because the product had recently attained the Certified for Microsoft Dynamics (CFMD) certification, Microsoft's highest level of certification for ISV solutions integrated to Dynamics. A component of the certification process required jLAN Mobile to be reviewed by a Microsoft software testing center. The localization effort was made easier through adherence to a code analysis policy that made the software compliant with Microsoft standard globalization rules.

The solution also uses the WWAN (cellular data network) to remotely connect the account executives' Windows Mobile powered Treo devices to Microsoft Dynamics GP. Pricing, stock levels, and customer data are stored on the devices in Microsoft SQL Server Compact Edition and updated whenever an Internet connection is available.

All of Citizen's mobile account executives in Mexico now use the jLAN solution on sales calls with customers. With success of this mobile solutions deployment, Citizen is planning to broaden the use of this solution to other countries.

"We have similar distribution requirements in other countries. Those account executives could also benefit by having real-time access to stock information and the ability to wirelessly submit new orders," Graupera said. "There is a lot of opportunity out there where we can leverage the technology."

Benefits

Improved Customer Relations:

Citizen's account executives now have access to accurate, up-to-the-minute information on inventory levels, pricing, promotions and customer account history. As a result, their field sales team is more effective on sales calls and can provide better customer service. The company is experiencing fewer lost sales, reduced back orders and data entry errors, and more efficient product delivery.

More Efficient Operations:

Since deploying the solution, Citizen has achieved greater operational efficiencies. New orders are now in the system in minutes instead of hours or days. Data entry errors were reduced by 50% because sales people now use bar code scanners to enter line items to orders eliminating the need to key in part numbers.

Faster order-to-cash cycle:

The long delays between capturing new orders, fulfilling the orders and getting those orders paid has been dramatically reduced. This solution speeds up the entire process so now orders are paid 5 days earlier on average. Citizen has also reduced the amount of back orders by \$300,000 which translates into an equivalent amount of increased revenue.

Software and Services

jLAN Mobile Suite

Windows Mobile

Microsoft Dynamics GP

Microsoft Server Products

Technologies

Microsoft .NET Compact Framework

Microsoft Visual Studio 2008

Hardware

Windows Mobile Devices

Socket Mobile Laser Scanners

Citizens Printers

Local Partner

MTP Consultant