WORLD'S LARGEST SESAME PROCESSOR MOBILIZES WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS, GAINS WIDESPREAD REAL-TIME INFORMATION ACCESS

INCREASES LOGISTICS EFFICIENCIES TO BEST LEVELS SINCE COMPANY INCEPTION

HAITOGLOU FLOOR MANAGER- LOOKING OVER REAL-TIME REPORTS

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— Nikolaos Goutzelis
Materials Logistics Manager, Haitoglou Bros SA.

Company	**Haitoglou Bros SA**
Industry	**Manufacturing – Food**
Location	**Greece**

BACKGROUND

Through continuous development, accumulated know-how and expertise in sesame processing since 1924, Haitoglou Bros SA has become the leading processor and supplier of sesame seeds and sesame related articles worldwide. Their facilities, conveniently located close to the port of Thessaloniki in Greece, are housed in 80,000 square metres of purpose built premises, over a private property of 230,000 square metres, including processing buildings and warehouses. With a production capacity of 150 tons of sesame per day, Haitoglou's sesame processing plant is a modern installation of the highest hygienic standards and design, equipped with fully automated, closed-type processing lines.

Constant development and extrovert orientation is omnipresent in their corporate activity. Customer satisfaction and stable, long-lasting trade relations are the prime mover of investments in infrastructure, R&D and total quality management. Haitoglou's business partners include major multinational food industries, bakeries, confectionery manufacturers, retailers as well as medium size companies and individual professionals.

Challenge

Enable real-time data distribution beyond the desktop for better resource planning, allocation

Most of Haitoglou's operations occur in a manufacturing and warehousing environment. In other words, most of their employees spend their days working on foot or a forklift – far away from a traditional office. Yet, for several years, the only way employees could input critical logistical data was via desktop computers in offices located off the warehouse and factory floors. Information was then distributed on the shop floor intermittently via paper printouts. This process challenged Haitiglou's ability to deliver a highly-responsive customer service experience and coordinate inventory and distribution logistics with supply chain partners. The delayed data distribution and disparate reporting inputs made it nearly impossible to make real-time adjustments to production levels and contributed to longer lead times for shipment of processed goods.

Given that modern day production tempos are rising rapidly amidst internal business growth and an evolving socio-economic climate, Haitoglou's operations necessitate real-time data access from the production lines and warehouse floors. Managers need to have total visibility into Haitoglou's multi-faceted business so they can view current customer orders, manage supply levels, coordinate distribution schedules, troubleshoot equipment issues, and mitigate quality control issues. This requires a centralized information management system that can aggregate and analyze data collected from multiple sources, across all lines of business, and then make real-time reports available via multiple computer platforms. Thus, Haitoglou initiated a significant overhaul of its systems and processes, investing in new technology solutions that were more conducive to its modern-day operations structure.

Already in the midst of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system rollout, Haitoglou really needed a mobility platform that could extend their software and back-office systems to all areas of operation inside – and eventually outside – the four walls of their sesame production facilities. In short, they recognized the need for a more connected, more intelligent, and completely mobile information system that enabled operational decisions to be made – from anywhere – based on actionable data such as actual supply and demand levels versus historical trends.

Solution

Xplore R12 rugged tablets sync with Entersoft ERP to deliver accurate and actionable data across warehousing facilities

Business Network Computer (B.N.C.), the solutions provider leading Haitoglou's Entersoft ERP software integration, recommended that Haitoglou consider equipping processing line and warehouse floor personnel, among other department employees, with mobile computers in order to reduce lag time in data collection and distribution. B.N.C. noted that the Xplore R12 rugged tablet PC in particular could deliver applied mobility solutions to each of Haitoglou's business challenges, providing secure and constant access to the ERP system from anywhere.

After testing and evaluating several mobile computing options in the warehouse environment first, the Xplore R12 rugged tablet indeed proved to be the right PC platform for Haitoglou's operating environment. The R12 was the only mobile computer that provided the rugged protection the sesame processor needed for forklift use, as well as other workflows inside its facilities' four walls, without having to compromise on any other computing capabilities or workflow applications.

"Chris Kamaris at B.N.C is a valuable partner in terms of developing, applying and supporting the right solution efficiently," noted Nikolaos Goutzelis, materials logistics manager, Haitoglou Bros SA. "We're grateful that he introduced us to the Xplore rugged tablet solution as the complementary ERP delivery platform. It has very quickly

enabled us to collect and share accurate data inside and outside our company's premises using online applications. In turn, it has made it possible for the first time ever to make the right decisions about our operations in a timely manner."

Haitoglou's warehouse personnel are currently using the Xplore R12 rugged tablets to receive and place orders, with data being submitted and distributed up-to-the-minute via the ERP software. The R12s are also mounted on the forklifts to provide specific order picking guidance to drivers, who then use the tablets' built-in barcode scanners to confirm accurate inventory selection. External label printers are plugged in via the tablets' I/O ports to conduct shipment labeling tasks in real-time. The R12 rugged tablet also features a built-in camera, digital pen, and touchscreen that make stock inspection and reporting much easier and much more accurate.

"Before we introduced the Xplore rugged tablets to our forklift drivers and other warehouse managers, they would have to anticipate when orders of materials would come in, pick and deliver the stock based on educated guesses, and then print and forward shipping information only after orders were actually issued. This sometimes led to multiple order picking trips for single customer orders, or the over picking of stock that had to then be returned to the shelves once actual order amounts were confirmed," continued Goutzelis.

Plus, stock inventory could only take place after all other tasks had been finished and all incoming and outgoing order activities had been forwarded and processed. Then, workers would still have to document findings and shipment reports on paper on the warehouse floor and later walk up to the offices to update Haitoglou's systems.

As Goutzeli indicated: "The old process was prone to data entry errors and costly delays in reporting that created quality assurance issues and significant productivity losses. This is no longer the case thanks to the data mobility we've gained with Xplore rugged tablet PCs."

Today, everyone involved has the latest information online, in real time thanks to the on-the-go-accessibility and reliable connectivity that only the R12 rugged tablets could provide. Stock

BENEFITS

Offers reliable, real-time access to the critical data collected and distributed via the ERP system

Eliminates unnecessary trips to offices for desktop data entry

Supports implementation of custom workflow applications

Saves time, money across all lines of business

Adaptable for use beyond warehouse and processing facilities in the future

replenishment is automated and orders can be placed in real-time, and at the last minute if needed. Workflow software to support standard reporting procedures such as ISO, HACCP, and IFS have also been designed to be applied and monitored in real time.

Results
Faster data processing leads to faster prep, processing of food products

Since introducing the Xplore R12 rugged tablets in its warehouse facilities, Haitoglou has begun monitoring all activity-specific information input by workers on the warehouse floor – regardless of actual location – in real time. This has allowed them to make more clinical observations about current operational efficiencies and challenges and enabled them to make real-time decisions and resource allocations to improve workflow productivity right then and there. Haitoglou has also gained the ability to re-arrange daily and longer-term warehouse goals and re-define warehouse operating procedures with clear "how to" instructions that workers can follow. The implementation of mobility-powered processes has led to significant cost savings and faster job completion. In fact, all of the activities that take place "in the field," away from the traditional office environment, can now be completed 50 percent faster – and with zero failures in data entry – thanks to workers' complete system accessibility.

"Before upgrading to the Entersoft ERP and then mobilizing that entire information system using Xplore rugged tablets, we were not able to input or retrieve any production or warehouse workflow data into any business system unless we were physically in an office environment and logged into a desktop computer," noted Goutzelis. "There was an immediate return on our investment in Xplore's rugged tablet mobility solution."

In just six months, Haitoglou's SKU traceability times in the warehouse were reduced by more than 40 percent while stock replenishment efficiency increased by more than 30 percent. Their (FIFO) non-compliance was also reduced to zero percent – a first in company history.

"We have reduced our internal calls to and from the warehouse to nearly zero, so workers can now focus on what really needs to be done. All of our routine tasks are being executed – and completed – with less effort and in less time," Goutzelis boasted.

What's Next
Moving beyond fixed forklift terminal, desktop PCs in all departments

Haitoglou is currently in the process of equipping every forklift in the logistics department – including goods processing – with Xplore rugged tablets. The sesame processor will also replace desktop PCs currently used by the sales, quality assurance, and technical departments with Xplore R12 rugged tablets in the near future.

"The efficiency gains we realized by simply issuing Xplore's mobile tablets was unprecedented," Goutzelis continued. "In the history of the company, no other technology investment has single-handedly made the difference that the tablets have made thus far in the warehouse environment. We want to achieve the same improvements in all lines of business."

Fortunately, the Xplore rugged tablet-based computing solution is flexible enough to scale across all Haitoglou's departmental workflow systems when ready. The R12's widely adaptive user experience will make it easy for new end-users to access the applications and data relevant to their jobs, whether they're in an office or not.