

The Customer:

ARVINMERITOR

ArvinMeritor is a motor vehicle components manufacturer based in Lyon, France. The company's product portfolio includes integrated systems, modules and components for light vehicle, truck, trailer and specialty equipment OEMs, and the commercial aftermarket.



BACKGROUND

ArvinMeritor (NYSE:ARM) is an \$8 billion supplier to the global motor vehicle industry. They employ approximately 31,000 workers in 25 countries, and participate in 24 joint ventures in 12 of those countries. The company's product portfolio includes integrated systems, modules and components for light vehicle, truck, trailer and specialty equipment OEMs, and the commercial aftermarket. ArvinMeritor products are part of virtually every vehicle on the road today.

THE CHALLENGE

ArvinMeritor's Lyon plant in western France was established in 1970. Today, the plant produces trailer axles for trucks and employs 700 people. Approximately 500 axles are produced daily for companies including Renault and Volvo. Once an axle is completed on the manufacturing line, a forklift equipped with a rugged mobile computer removes the part from the production line and transfers it to a designated outdoor warehouse location.

ArvinMeritor had originally equipped their forklifts with rugged DOS-based computers but wanted to upgrade them to modern computers running a Windows® operating system. Other requirements included reliability and ruggedness, as forklift-mounted computers are subjected to heavy, constant vibration. And since the forklifts are also operated outdoors, the computer system had to be able to survive and work reliably in various temperatures and weather conditions.

"The temperatures in the forklift cabin can become very high. There is also plenty of dust; the environment is very industrial and the operators often keep the forklift windows open, so the computer needs to be properly sealed", clarifies Gabriel Parron, the plant's Logistics Manager.

THE SOLUTION

After an evaluation period, Xplore's iX104C2D Tablet PC along with the active xDock vehicle docking system from Raisonance S.A., were selected as the hardware solution. Raisonance is a recognized leader specializing in automatic identification and systems integration. The Xplore tablets provided an ideal solution for the warehouse application, as they are engineered, 3rd-party tested, and warranted to military standards (MIL-STD-810F) for environmental extremes. The Raisonance advanced docking system allows quick tablet removal when necessary, but the tablet can also be locked to the cradle to prevent unauthorized removal. ArvinMeritor uses the tablets primarily as forklift-mounted computers and are rarely removed from the forklift.

Software for ArvinMeritor was developed by Groupe Silicomp and provides large icons on the display, which the user operates with finger touch. The forklift operator views the work order schedules on the tablet, which is connected to the wireless local area network at the plant. The work order specifies either an axle transfer from the production line to the warehouse, or fulfillment of a customer order where the forklift transfers the required item from the outdoor warehouse to the dispatch truck. The system has improved efficiency by allowing the company access to real-time storage locations and inventory levels data.

"We were not using a paper-based system to carry out the selection process before the Xplore tablets were deployed; we had outdated, forklift-mounted computers. The major advantage for us is the new, faster overall system enable efficiency in our warehouse management processes", says Parron and continues: "A well-run warehouse must have a reliable computing system that enables real-time communication between various work groups who manage successive processes such as manufacturing personnel and forklift operators."

