

Mobile printing solution increases flexibility at Tesco

Tesco, the UK's largest grocery retailer, has selected a mobile printing solution from Zebra Technologies to increase flexibility, keep queuing to a minimum and help continue its improvement in efficiency on the shop floor. Tesco has rolled out the Zebra QL220 printers to 700 of its stores across the UK and the Republic of Ireland for price markdown applications.

The Zebra QL220s, deployed through specialist retail integrator Herbert Retail, were chosen as robust label printers that could allow simple, seamless, real-time integration into Tesco's 802.11B wireless network. The first two-inch 802.11B-enabled mobile printer on the market in Europe, Zebra's QL220 offered plug-and-play interoperability with Tesco's existing shop-floor terminals.



Neil Taylor, Strategic IT Development Manager at Tesco said:

“The Zebra portable printer, combined with the PDA terminals that our staff use throughout our stores, provides us with a rugged and reliable wireless mobile solution, live on the shop floor for price markdown. Through our accurate stock ordering system, the need for price markdowns is kept to a minimum, but we saw a need for making this process more efficient on the shop floor. Our staff find the Zebra printer ideal for the purpose, with its choice of shoulder strap or belt attachment, the printer is quick easy to use and enables instant production of mark down labels at the shelf.”

Staff using the new markdown solution can scan products on the shop floor to obtain real-time pricing information on reduced items and fresh produce that is nearing its expiration date. They can request markdown labels that are generated on the spot by the Zebra printers – ensuring labels are not lost or transposed and saving the operators the time that they would otherwise have to spend in handwriting labels or “dialling up” prices on a pricing gun. Printing barcoded labels for the products on demand, Zebra's printers help to minimise queue times as staff don't need to fumble with hand-written stickers or manually input prices: marked-down products are simply scanned at the checkout like any other product.

Rowan Fuller, business development manager, retail, at Zebra Technologies commented:

“Linking the printers wirelessly into Tesco’s in-store network gives much more flexibility and accuracy to the print and design of the price labels. For example, you can download fonts or graphics into the label designs to theme reductions if they are part of a new promotion. Previously, each printer would have to be programmed individually with the new fonts or logos, which might prevent users from making the most of the promotional opportunities. The wireless network allows all the printers to be reprogrammed simultaneously from a central location making the process simple and extremely cost effective.”

Herbert Retail supplies and maintains the Zebra printers for Tesco along with their PDAs, which have been deployed across the whole of the Tesco Estate. Glen Hall said;

“Tesco wanted to improve the efficiency of price changing on the shop floor, and made an informed decision. They are very pleased with the addition of the Zebra printers and the flexibility they have given its staff throughout its stores.”

Key benefits summary of the Zebra QL220 installation at Tesco:

- 802.11B compatible – first mobile printer of this kind in Europe
- Rugged and durable – high drop specification
- Functionality – able to include fonts and graphics in the label design
- No wires to wear or break
- Large label roll to reduce down time
- Unique batteries to reduce stealability
- Multiple battery chargers to reduce downtime
- Compatible with existing PDAs
- Reduces errors in markdown
- Reduces check out processing time for marked-down product