

# LXE Helps Dacotah Paper Co. Do It Right

## CASE STUDY

**DACOTAH PAPER CO.** - Dacotah's advertised performance standard is this: We Do It Right! So the 100-year-old wholesale distributor of 7,000 SKUs of industrial paper, janitorial supplies and equipment, washroom products, building products, food service disposables, incontinent products, packaging and office products, needed technology that would help the company continue to live up to that standard in the face of rising competitive pressures.

### DACOTAH PAPER CO.



In Dacotah's business, high levels of customer service, including next-day delivery to most areas, is the name of the game, and the warehouse operates around the clock. Orders must go out quickly and accurately, but the company must also keep a lid on internal costs. Dacotah services North Dakota, eastern South Dakota, Minnesota, eastern Montana and a part of Wisconsin.

So in the summer of 2005, the Fargo, North Dakota, distributor sought to increase the productivity and accuracy of its warehouse operations. The facility, newly expanded to 220,000 square feet, was already running efficiently on a home-grown warehouse management system. But to access documents such as pick orders, putaway instructions or to locate items, warehouse operators needed to walk over to stationary dumb terminals deployed throughout the warehouse. That cost the company in operator productivity, and sometimes led to errors.

"The biggest goal for us," says Don Gill, director of information systems for Dacotah Paper, "is to do things right for the customer."

So the company decided to employ automatic data collection in its warehouse, installing a Cisco 802.11b wireless network through a Fargo-based value-added reseller (VAR), Corporate Technologies. They also sought vehicle-mounted and handheld computers for use by their warehouse operators to eliminate the need of walking around and finding an open stationary terminal to obtain data.

### Wanted: Abundant Functionality

Based on the recommendations of its VAR, Dacotah chose LXE VX6 vehicle-mounted computers for its forklifts, deploying 15 of the CE. NET ½-screen industrial computers.



The units needed to be rugged enough for the warehouse environment, which is maintained at about 40 degrees. "We looked at others, but these seemed to offer the most functions for what we needed," says Gill. Handheld computers are used for those operators not using forklifts and to scan high racks.

A key requirement of the units was the ability to run in terminal-emulation mode, to interact with the AS/400-based host.

"They also had to be easy to use and understand," says Gill. "We wanted to match the AS/400 interface." Corporate Technologies helped scale the user interface for the different screens, so the experience would be as similar as possible to what operators were accustomed to.

Operators use the computers for every warehouse operation, including receiving, putaway, picking, shipping, cycle counting and location, inventory and item look-up, interacting with the units via keyboard. The company is currently in the process of bar coding its items and locations, and will soon shift to scanning for data entry. "In one year, when we're completely running the whole system, we'll see the full benefit," Gill explains.

### Improved Productivity & Accuracy

The VX6s have already proven their value, Gill says. "The productivity is up because they don't have to drive around to the other end of a warehouse to get to a fixed terminal. The accuracy is up, but will especially rise as we get more into scanning." Operators are becoming accustomed to using the units, and like the idea of having anywhere-access to the information they need.

"LXE has done a good job for us," he adds, noting that warehouse processes are already more efficient. "We're definitely staying ahead of the competition in our area."

**About LXE Inc.** LXE Inc. improves supply chain performance by applying over 36 years' experience developing wireless products and solutions. From wireless computers, advanced auto-ID technologies, and wireless network infrastructure, to our award-winning customer support - LXE's easy-to-use products are as reliable as the people who install and support them.

Based in Norcross, Georgia, LXE also offers a full range of turnkey services, including radio integration, project and installation management, network design, technical support, and repair services. LXE is a wholly-owned subsidiary of EMS Technologies, Inc. (DAQ: ELMG), and has offices worldwide. For more information, visit [www.lxe.com](http://www.lxe.com).

