

# Reliability from LXE: The Perfect Fit for FMI International.

## CASE STUDY

**FMI INTERNATIONAL.** Since 1979, FMI International has been a leader in providing logistics services to the fashion industry and retail community. A record of consistent, reliable service and innovative solutions to meet the unique needs of customers has made FMI the logistics provider of choice to many of the world's largest companies. Let FMI demonstrate how a single platform of integrated services, state-of-the-art information technology and experience in flawless execution can work for you.



*Before many of the hottest fashions are introduced to the world on the runways in New York, they arrive at an FMI International warehouse. FMI provides third-party logistics (3PL) services to many leading apparel and footwear companies. The wireless computers FMI used to support warehouse operations quickly fell out of fashion, leaving the company to seek a better fit. Switching to LXE vehicle-mounted computers provided the perfect match of form, fit and function.*

### The Show Must Go On

"When we put the first system in, we hoped to get two years out of the wireless terminals. We were lucky to be getting six to eight months," said Sean Burns, director of network services at FMI's 300,000 square foot facility in Carteret, NJ. "We wanted a more reliable system that would give us more uptime. We needed a system that was up more often than not, which was no longer the case with the previous equipment."

The unreliable wireless computers complicated operations, even when they weren't broken. Response time for transactions with FMI's warehouse management system was slow, and wireless network connections were often dropped completely.

"When workers were having trouble with a terminal or the system would crash, they'd go back to paper, which they considered easier to use. Then we wouldn't have good records for the work that was done or know if it was accurate," said Burns. "When we would have to go to paper-based recording, we would send someone out to spot check inventory locations. We'd sometimes find that workers had put things away in the wrong place, or recorded the wrong location. When you went to find those goods to make a shipment, our productivity numbers took a hit."

FMI's challenge to upgrading its wireless computers

was more than finding a rugged, reliable replacement. The new computers needed to support current wireless LAN interface and security standards, yet also provide special terminal emulation for integration with FMI's proprietary WMS. FMI evaluated nearly 100 computer and software options to find the best fit.

### Try LXE on for Size

"We brought in a few computer vendors for demos and evaluation. At that point it was a no brainer that we'd go with LXE," said Burns. "LXE already had a solution for every problem we had with the previous computers. What really stood out about LXE computers was all the little things: having a backlit keyboard, giving us the option to have the keyboard right on the screen, the flexibility from having so many optional features, and how easy it would be to upgrade models."

FMI now uses LXE VX6 half screen & VX7 full screen forklift-mounted wireless computers at facilities in New Jersey, Miami and Southern California. The VX series features a variety of screen and keyboard configurations, can run the Microsoft® Windows® CE .NET operating system, and is fully compatible with 802.11b-standard wireless networks, including support for Cisco® Systems' LEAP security and Cisco Compatible Extensions (CCX).

Built in management and application security features prevent workers from accidentally losing data or disabling the computers. "I want our people working on what I want them to be working on, so we set it so they can only access one application at a time," said Burns. "LXE was one of the only vendors who could provide this right out of the box. Others said they could do it, but it would take some customization and software development."



## Accuracy is in Style

FMI uses handheld bar code readers tethered to its mobile computers, which can also support speech input and many other options.

"Now we bar code scan everything. Before, the system would allow the operator to override the bar code scan and record things manually if they were having trouble with the terminal or the scanner. They bypassed scanning a lot because they thought it was easier to do manually, but there were a lot of mistakes. Now the system doesn't allow manual data entry, and we're much more accurate," said Burns.

The improved accuracy has also produced labor savings, because workers are more productive and manual spot checks are no longer necessary.

"We can definitely see an increase in performance. We knew our workers would become more productive," said Burns. "Writing down activity on paper just isn't accurate. Accuracy probably increased 30 percent to 40 percent with the new system. It was huge. And the labor savings that result from that are exponential."

One reason productivity is up is because the LXE computers don't go down. Fashion can be fickle, but the logistics behind it can't be. FMI's customers rely on it to get products to market while they're hot.

"We just don't have hardware failures anymore, and it's very, very rare that we lose the network connection. Our forklifts can go anywhere in our warehouse and have coverage," said Burns. "We expect the LXE terminals will last at least five years, and we've seen nothing to make us think they won't. They are rock solid. We've had no problems with them."

That kind of performance will never go out of style.



**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. (NASDAQ: ELMG), and has offices worldwide. For more information, visit [www.lxe.com](http://www.lxe.com).