

Tembec Rolls with New Computers.

CASE STUDY

TEMBEC. Tracking giant rolls of paper as they come off production lines and into the warehouse is an essential activity at the St. Francisville, Louisiana unit of Tembec USA. Parent company Tembec is a \$4 billion integrated Canadian forest products company that manufactures wood products, market pulp and papers at more than 55 manufacturing units throughout Canada as well as in France, the United States and Chile. At the St. Francisville facility, Tembec USA produces coated magazine paper and specialty papers for everything from bathroom cups to coffee filters.



Text-based LXE 1280 terminals had been serving the Tembec USA's St. Francisville facility faithfully for years. But when the operation's Unix-based host application, Honeywell-Measurex's OptiVision manufacturing execution system, was being upgraded to Windows, Tembec USA refreshed their data collection hardware within their mill, including production and warehouse operations.

Extreme Conditions

The new computers would need to stand up to Louisiana's hot, muggy temperatures and the rough treatment they sometimes receive in the warehouse. Since they would be mounted on clamp trucks - forklift-like vehicles equipped with clamp machinery to grip large rolls of paper - they also had to withstand significant vibration.

Connections into the computers would also need to be highly reliable. In the past, long-range scanners tethered to the LXE terminals were used without holsters; when they weren't using them, drivers tended to throw them onto the dashboard. Inevitably, a scanner would periodically fall off and get run over, destroying the communications port where it connected to the terminal at the same time.

Extreme Products

Tembec USA decided to stay with LXE, deploying VX5 vehicle-mounted computers on clamp trucks in their warehouses, paired with scanners. They also installed Cisco 1200 wireless access points mounted with LXE Spire®



Antennas, extending coverage into the production area as well as the warehouses for inventory tracking.

The LXE VX5s are running a full version of Windows. Windows will enable future applications under consideration, such as a Web-based application to track truck locations in Tembec USA's lot, to better coordinate loading and unloading. A retractable cord keeps scanners in place and preserves connectivity to the VX5 computers.

After installing the VX5s, Tembec ran them in terminal emulation mode for one month. When the new system was implemented, they merely erased the old icons from the desktop, and ran the new windows based system, making for a smooth transition.

Windows With a View...Into Inventory

As each one- to two-ton roll of paper comes off the production line and down the "lowerator" (think elevator, going down), a clamp truck picks it up and the operator scans the attached bar code label to receive putaway instructions. Upon arrival at the bay, the operator scans the bay location to confirm proper location and update inventory. The same computers are used to pick paper rolls from those locations and load them into rail cars or trucks, updating the inventory with additional scans.

The ability to run Windows right on the clamp truck improves ease of use and flexibility.

If there is any computer interaction needed, it's easier. For example, before, if you wanted to run something off of a networked printer, you had to walk back into the office. Now that can be done right from the truck.



About LXE Inc. LXE Inc. improves supply chain performance by applying over 35 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.