

Cardale opens the door to better proof of delivery

Automated proof of delivery systems can play a key role in streamlining some of the administrative processes involved in a distribution operation. Cardale Doors Limited is a leading manufacturer that has developed a proof of delivery system which has now been backed up by a second system, developed by Spirit Data Capture Limited.



Cardale Doors manufactures and supplies the widest range of garage doors in the UK. The company, which was formed 40 years ago, is based in Brackley, Northamptonshire, and also has facilities in Scunthorpe and Glasgow.

Cardale has recently been developing a signature capture system based around Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), for use when delivering doors throughout the country. This system will enable drivers to obtain the customer's signature electronically. The company also decided to source a back-up solution that could be used in case of problems with the driver's PDA.

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Case Study

Stephen Holden, Business Systems Director of the Cardale Group, explains: "We needed a system that would enable the customer to sign the delivery note, and would then allow us to scan this signature into our system at a later stage. We had received one quote which was very high, so I decided to use the Internet to see what else was available.

"The first suitable company I found was Spirit Data Capture, who specialise in automated data capture solutions. I contacted them, and they were very helpful. We were looking for a hand held device that would be easy to use (as we thought that we would only need it infrequently) and quick. It also needed to be capable of producing high quality scanned images that could be printed onto the proof of delivery documents sent to our customers."

Spirit recommended IMAGETEAM™ 4600 retail and commercial grade area imagers from Hand Held Products. These are economical, omni-directional barcode readers which are both fast and easy to use. Cardale subsequently bought three of the scanners.

Stephen continues: "Spirit worked with our suppliers to design the layout of the documentation we would need, and carried out development work on the interface with the scanner. This included the design of software that drops an image of the customer's signature into the right file on our central system."

Initially, the scanners were intended as a back-up system, which would be used once a month to scan about 40 or 50 signatures. However, due to a delay implementing Cardale's primary proof of delivery system, the barcode readers have been used in its place – and are currently scanning several thousand images per

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month. The IMAGETEAM 4600 scans the signature on each despatch note and also reads the coded despatch number.

"The devices were installed in January 2005," says Stephen Holden, "and we started using the system in February. We have had no problems with it at all, and the users really like it. Previously, we were spending six man-days a month stripping off each proof of delivery note and attaching it to the invoice. With the new system, we can laser print a copy of the scanned proof of delivery note with the invoice, so no manual intervention is needed. This has saved us about four and a half man-days per month."

He adds: "Spirit have been very good, and their Sales Director, Kevin Thomas, has been particularly helpful. He recently became involved in another problem relating to the despatching process, and has given us some excellent advice. We would happily use them again in the future."



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