



Boonthavorn Ceramics Co., Ltd

Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1

Boosting efficiency in Boonthavorn's complex supply chain management

When one thinks of tiles, Boonthavorn is at the top of customers' mind. Established in 1977, Boonthavorn Ceramics started as a tiles supplier and has grown from strength to strength, to be one of Thailand's leading one-stop home renovation center. This is made possible by the wide range of products offered by the company's 3 main business units namely, ceramics & sanitary ware, kitchen furniture & equipment, and renovation materials. Currently, the company employs over 3,000 staff and plans to expand its network to 11 branches by the end of 2017. The Bangkok regional branches are expected to be ready to cater to the growing real estate market of neighboring regions. The company's main customers include architects, interior designers, contractors, and consumers.

Mr. Chatchawan Terdphadungchai, Logistics Management Branch Manager of Boonthavorn Ceramic and Ms. Nongluck Tanti-anupap, Logistics System Development Manager attribute the company's success to a few key factors. "The customers' confidence in our brand is built upon the quality and variety of our product range, coupled with our vast experiences and expertise in construction materials. More importantly, we continuously invest in our brand image by expanding the floor area to include new value-added services for customers. One example is the virtual reality feature whereby customers can use our simulation technology to get an immersive visualization of our design"

Boonthavorn Ceramics is one the first companies in the industry that deploys advanced technology to manage and control the complexity in the supply chain brought about by an ever expanding product offering. The company's largest warehouse located in Rangsit is the central hub that coordinates all logistics activities across each branch in Thailand. To ensure that the customers get their products on time, a reliable and efficient logistics management system needs to be in place to help them work systematically.

Panasonic recommends Windows 10 Pro.



Challenges

In Yr 2006, Boonthavorn implemented a new supply chain management system that aims to help examine, manage and deliver products to customers. The project would help reduce administrative cost and overcome resource allocation issues.

The new system involved several different applications - SAP, Oracle and a Warehouse Management System (WMS). It also required the introduction of handheld devices so that the staff can have access to stock information on the go. However, the handheld devices posed challenges and efficiency could not be optimized.

"We had tried many brands of handheld devices but continued to experience issues that affected our operations. The devices were unstable which often caused the system to hang midway through the job. Also, our local staff is not well versed in English and the lack of Thai language support in the user interface made it difficult for them to operate the device correctly. In addition, short-life battery and unstable internet connection meant a lot of time was wasted in troubleshooting, leading to significant system downtime. We were in need of a solution that could help us boost our productivity and efficiency to run a smooth, seamless operation", said Mr. Chatchawan.

Why Panasonic? / Business Outcome

"When we turned to Panasonic Toughpad, we were pleasantly surprised that the tablet did not heat up easily like the tablets from other brands and helped to stabilize the operation. Compatibility with various applications also meant that we did not need extensive testing to ensure the stability of the operation. That's when we decided that Toughpad FZ-G1 was the answer to our problems", commented Mr. Chatchawan

Boonthavorn Ceramics deployed 18 Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 tablets to run its SAP-based ERP system in the central and branch warehouses. In addition, 12 touchpads were fitted for VNA (Very Narrow Aisle Truck) operation in the car and another 6 for Reach Truck with charger inside.

The Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 robust, durable and waterproof features were ideal for Boonthavorn warehousing conditions for building and renovation materials. The shock resistance (up to 4 feet) feature endured any damage of dropping the device while the warehousing team reaches to heights on the upper rack. Packed with other efficiency features such as the stable internet, responsive touch screen, long battery life and high system stability, it is an uninterrupted operation for the busy Boonthavorn supply chain.

Most employees who use Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 are highly satisfied with its performance and the Thai language support. It was a key success factor in the implementation as users are able to operate the device to check, order and distribute products with greater speed and accuracy.

Expressing his satisfaction of using the product, Mr. Chatchawan said, "Since implementation, we have been able to significantly improve the stock accuracy from 70% up to 99%. Previously, a stock audit exercise requires a large team to check all the products which can take up to a week to complete. Now the stock status is updated in real time and employees can track the stock inventory of products, circulation, and prices whenever they want"



Future Plan

In addition to a full phase-in of Panasonic Toughpad as the handheld device for the Rangsit warehouse, Boonthavorn Ceramics is looking into an opportunity to further improve delivery time. This would be done through the introduction of an electronic signature system and GPS technology for the fleet of 300 delivery trucks. The project is being studied using Panasonic Toughpad FZ-G1 as the tool so that products can be delivered to customers faster than current service levels.

"Brand confidence stems from what we promise our customers and how well we are able to meet it. We need technology and the right tools to gain competitive advantage and maintain our leading position in the market", said Mr. Chatchawan.



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