

## Sales Support System

### Customer : Nihon Shokken Co., Ltd.

**Out on their rounds, as they create business opportunities with clients, busy sales reps make full use of the extended battery operation of their TOUGHBOOK PCs, which they wield as superior tough and lightweight tools.**

Pleasing the public with the BANSANKAN Series, Kyuden Yakiniku Sauce, Sora to Daichi Japanese Dressing and other hit products, maker of sauces and seasonings Nihon Shokken is a respected household name. Constantly on the move, visiting their many clients, each of the active sales reps takes the initiative to work out proposals for creating new business for the company and their customers. Appreciating powerful support, they take full advantage of the lightweight, toughness, and extended battery operation of the TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged R Series.



## Releasing a string of hit products in the pursuit of wellbeing through food culture



The name of the palatial new factory was derived from KO Group, the name of the Nihon Shokken Group. Spreading before the KO Kyuden Koujo is a European style formal garden.

Nihon Shokken is proud to be the number one shipper of seasoning sauce (**tare**) in Japan. Company activities, however, extend overseas and it has established a global presence supported by operations deployed in eight bases in Asia, North America, and elsewhere. Then, in 2006, modeled on that jewel of Baroque Age, the Belvedere Palace, Nihon Shokken built new factory facilities, equipped with the latest technology. Known as KO Kyuden Koujo (KO Palace Factory) and located next to the company headquarters, the plant was designed with galleries to enable visitors to tour the facilities. The factory embodies the company's philosophy of 'adding interest to life and increasing wellbeing through the enjoyment of food' and expresses its commitment to 'providing service to customers.'

## Timing and efficiency are key to making successful proposals to clients

In Japan, the company operates from 81 sales offices. The national network keeps 1,700 sales staff busy. As well as maintaining contacts with major clients and food product makers, they also run sales stands at supermarkets and department stores, and visit all kinds of restaurants and eating places.

From developing sales-ready-side dishes, seasoned meat products, and other items, to setting up in-store product displays and creating slogans, and even creating menus for restaurants featuring Nihon Shokken products, each member of the sales staff gets experience of producing both products and sales spaces. To deal with these situations, the sales reps need an enormous amount of product and market data at their fingertips. Then, there are about 134,000 shops in the database, and there are even times when a single sales rep may visit 20 sites in a single day. That is why, to provide the customer with the optimal products and well timed information, the sales operation cannot do without information management tools.

So, to control inventory and manage negotiations, Nihon Shokken developed its own business application. This was installed on compact, stylus-based mobile computers (external keyboard type) that were issued to the sales reps.



Shuji Ishimizu , Head of Ehime System Development Section, Information Systems Division. We were looking for a light but strong computer with long battery life and hit on the TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged R Series. Its capabilities really stood out from the pack.

## Disadvantages of stylus-only input become apparent



Naohiro Osakabe, Ehime System Development Section, Information Systems Division. The mobile computer that we used before had a lot of breakdowns, and this caused work efficiency to drop.

The application created for use with these handheld computers was designed to facilitate stylus-only input. But in actual use character entry issues, such as misprints, rapidly became a problem. Then after the initial introduction period, users found that the batteries deteriorated more quickly than anticipated and that there were more breakdowns than predicted. "Broken down computers were sent to the Information Systems Division (at the Head Office) from sales offices all over the country, and we had to return properly functioning units. At one time we had to replace half a dozen units a day. It was really time-consuming" (Naohiro Osakabe, Ehime System Development Section, Information Systems Division, Ehime Head Office). Faced with these kinds of problems, Nihon Shokken thought about using another mobile PC. As a result they chose the TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged R Series as the new terminal.

## TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged R Series introduced to every sales office

When looking for a new mobile computer, the first thing was to try out and compare contending models from several makers. The TOUGHBOOK R Series emerged as the winning candidate for adoption. After a fixed period of further testing, the R Series was introduced to every sales office. Three winning features assured adoption: light weight, toughness, and extended battery operation. The company also found that, no longer being plagued by trouble with the computers, operational efficiency improved.

As Mr. Osakabe put it, "Sales reps do not return to base until they have made all the calls planned for the day. They have to have their mobile computer on hand for use all the time they are out. Besides that, they need to carry product samples, marketing materials, and things like that. They end up having to walk around with a lot of stuff. That's why we thought it was especially important to minimize their burden. The two deciding factors were lightness and extended battery operation." These words, spoken by someone who has done all the sales and marketing work mentioned earlier, were said with real feeling.



"When it comes to something you have to carry around, lightness is the thing that keeps you smiling" says Mr. Ishimizu, who is happily posing here with an R Series held lightly under his arm.

## Used for product inventory and current order control, and for negotiation management



A compact and lightweight self-contained computer that does not need an external keyboard, and which operates for a long time on battery power. Everything adds up to ease of use.

TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged are invaluable partners that are well used by the sales reps. The R Series is typically used by Nihon Shokken in the following ways.

### 1) Product inventory and current order control

Sales reps have to record product inventory on site with customers (in places such as supermarket stockrooms) so they can order the right amount when they return to base. They often have to open and use their computers in cramped spaces, and they have been delighted with the small size and light weight of the R Series.

### 2) Recording and managing sales meetings

Before calling on a customer, it is important to understand what kind of customer you are approaching and the current status of dealings. The content of meetings and state of progress are recorded and kept up to date.

### 3) Production of proposal forms and point of purchase materials

TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged are used for creating proposal forms and presentation materials for use on site at the customer's, and also for POP materials used at supermarkets, retail stores, and other places.

### 4) Producing daily reports and correspondence

The computers are used for daily reports and writing mail for customers. Naturally this sometimes requires the entry of long sentences. The keyboard of TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged is much better suited to this task than the previous computer, which needed an external keyboard. The sales reps generally give the R Series high marks for ease of use.

## TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged: few breakdowns and it even looks good

Since the introduction of the TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged R Series, the incidence of computer problems has also dramatically decreased. Replacements for broken computers are hardly ever required. This is a great advantage, both for the sales reps and for the staff in the Head Office (Information Systems Division) who provide support.

The sales reps have even expressed delight at being able to use such a stylish computer.

“It’s been two years since we introduced the TOUGHBOOK R Series. According to our evaluations, the computer is reliably doing the job we initially intended. Looking ahead to the future, we are wondering what other roles it can take on a year or two from now. I think we’ll continue to make good use of the TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged (Shuji Ishimizu, Head of Ehime System Development Section, Information Systems Division).”

Nihon Shokken continues to find new ways to make eating more interesting, both for customers all over the world and for members of the public. From now on, we can be sure that, along with the TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged, the company will continue to flavor the tables of the world with various forms of food culture.



TOUGHBOOK Business-rugged with a customized plate featuring the Nihon Shokken logo.

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