CASE STUDY:

GLAZER’S BEER & BEVERAGE BREWS INNOVATION

WITH SMART MOBILE ROUTE ACCOUNTING TECHNOLOGY AND MOBILE PRINTING
Glazer’s Beer & Beverage, LLC (GBB) is among the most driven sales and marketing organizations in the wholesale beverage alcohol distribution industry today. The company is paving the roadway to expansion and continued growth with innovative mobile route solutions designed to streamline delivery operations and delight customers with world-class service.

Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, the fast-growing malt beverage distribution firm supports operations in Texas, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Recently, GBB invested in smart mobile technology to overcome the challenges and complexity of running about 275 delivery routes a day, ranging from five to 30 stops, with about 15 being the norm.

The chosen solution is a leading, road-tested route accounting software system for distributors from VIP (Vermont Information Processing), paired with two handheld hardware components: an Apple® iPhone® and a Brother RuggedJet 4 mobile printer. Since going live, GBB reports tremendous results, with higher efficiency and productivity for its 300 drivers. This helps drive profits and vastly improves the customer experience, which is “Job One” in the route business.
Pre-printed invoices a major pain point for drivers and customers

Prior to implementing a mobile technology solution, GBB was pre-printing order and delivery invoices and sending them out with the delivery drivers. However, if there were any changes at the delivery site – a damaged case or a changed order, for example – drivers had to correct the invoice on the fly. They then had to send the amended invoice back to the office in a timely manner so a clean, accurate copy could be generated for both the customer and GBB’s accounting department.

According to Pedro Ramirez, an operations administrator for GBB, the pre-printed invoices posed a challenge for drivers at customer sites. “We want our drivers to boost customer service and promote loyalty to GBB by making product deliveries as friendly, fast, and efficient as possible. When an order was changed due to breakage or customer preference, drivers had to amend the pre-printed invoice, changing product codes and pricing right onsite. This type of manual process can lead to errors and definitely detracts from the overall customer experience. At the end of the day, we still had to manually go through and check each invoice for accuracy. We needed to find a better way – and we did, thanks to advanced mobile technology.”

EASILY ADJUST ONSITE DELIVERY INVOICES

In terms of training, we looped software, phone, and printer training together, so drivers quickly became comfortable using the system and printing invoices.

Richelle McKenzie
Project Manager of Operations
Big improvements with iPhones linked to mobile printers

Richelle McKenzie, GBB’s Project Manager of Operations, shares the company’s transition to mobile technology. “In mid-2016, our company went live on VIP’s route accounting software system. We selected the iPhone over Windows mobile devices – which also had a handheld device and printer paired together – mainly because of the iOS platform’s shorter learning curve, intuitive navigation, and ease of interface with Brother RuggedJet 4 mobile printers certified for iOS.”

Brother is GBB’s exclusive business partner for mobile printers. The complete RuggedJet line is MFi certified, which played a strong role in the selection process. Shortly after the software system was selected, GBB’s issued drivers Apple iPhones paired with Brother RuggedJet 4 mobile printers in sturdy cases. The printers use Apple AirPrint® technology, allowing users to print directly from the smartphone to the printer without the need to download or install drivers. Tough, compact, and amazingly fast, the mobile printers are ready to go out of the box to print accurate, real-time order invoices, receipts, labels, and tags up to four inches wide.

Regarding implementation, McKenzie notes, “Initially we went live with the Wi-Fi version of the mobile printer, but quickly switched over to Bluetooth® because of the difficulty of finding reliable Wi-Fi connections in rural areas. And with these printers, our drivers have options in terms of how to carry them on the job. Some strap the case to their dolly, while many prefer to attach it to a shoulder strap or adjustable cross-body strap. In terms of training, we looped software, phone, and printer training together and were pleased that drivers of all technology levels quickly became comfortable using the system and printing invoices.”

“Our drivers really like the new system on their iPhone because it’s much easier to manage multiple invoices. It’s been a game changer.”

Pedro Ramirez
Operations Administrator
Mobility spurs innovative beer sales methods for special events

Empowered by this new mobile print technology, GBB has been exploring new ways to sell and distribute beer, especially during high-demand events such as street and park festivals, sporting events, and concerts.

For example, according to Swilling, “To better serve bar and restaurant customers during big sporting events and other times of strong demand, we devised and pilot tested a ‘mobile warehouse’ strategy.”

While the company won’t divulge specific details, the innovative strategy leverages their trucks, software, and mobile printers to dramatically improve the speed and efficiency with which they service these high-volume, variable-volume events. “Our drivers and customers really appreciate the faster, more flexible order and fulfillment process, and note a reduction in broken cases so often associated with big events. We are still testing the concept and have high hopes for its success,” says Swilling.

"Overall time savings between where we were before to where we are today averages 30 minutes to an hour per day per driver. With over 275 routes per day, that’s a significant improvement in productivity.

Matt Swilling
VP of Operations
More accurate invoices = happier drivers and customers

When it comes to driver and customer experiences with the company’s new mobile approach, Ramirez reports, “Our drivers really like the new system on their iPhone because it’s much easier to manage multiple invoices. It’s been a game changer. Initially, the biggest benefit was that they no longer had to do the math to amend invoices at the delivery site. Instead, they receive a clean invoice form to store and scan. Once the right products, codes, and pricing are entered at the site, they can print out an accurate invoice for the customer. It’s a positive experience for everyone.”

VP of Operations Matt Swilling adds yet another benefit to the list: “Some customers wanted the ability to scan in their order upon delivery,” he says. “Now we can print off a sheet listing UPC codes for the cases picked and delivered, and the customer can electronically scan down the sheet to check in the products. No more searching of pallets to locate and scan each and every case ordered. This process improvement is faster and more efficient for our drivers and, even more important, a major time savings for our high-volume customers.”

Measurable ROI fuels growth

Swilling shares that the new route accounting solution with mobile printing has delivered a measurable return on the technology investment. “Overall time savings between where we were before to where we are today averages 30 minutes to an hour per day per driver. With over 275 routes per day, that’s a significant improvement in productivity. Now that mobile technology and on-demand mobile printing is working so well for us, we’ll continue to look for new ways to use it to serve our customers, empower our team, and grow our business.”

Matt Swilling
VP of Operations

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