



The DATA CAPTURE Report

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Special SCAN: The DATA CAPTURE Report Reprint

Datalogic Streamlines Food Tracking For French Retailer

Combination of technologies prove increased efficiencies in supply chain.

In mid-October, **Datalogic Automation** announced that it has transformed fresh food sorting and distribution processes for a major French hypermarket chain, with the deployment of powerful imaging technology, providing temperature- and time-critical control of perishable goods. Datalogic is a vendor of bar code readers, data collection mobile computers, sensors, vision systems and laser marking systems.



*Gian Paolo Fedrigo,
CEO of Datalogic
Automation.*

With a goal of increasing speed and reliability, while saving time and money, the Bologna, Italy-based vendor recently installed its Datalogic NVS9000™ industrial high-end imaging system at the chain's distribution center, based in southwest France, to optimize the distribution of fresh produce. This includes dairy products, such as cheese and butter, which require speedy handling at temperature variances of between 3 and 4 degrees maximum. Through implementing the industry's fastest and highest quality imaging system, the

overall solution provided, means that one hour after they arrive from the external supplier, the goods are in delivery trucks on their way to the retail store—ensuring freshness and quality is maintained at all times.

The system's customized configuration overcomes the complex distribution requirements specific to the hypermarket chain. As one of France's market leading retailers, the company operates 16 logistics hubs throughout the country from where all products are dispatched to the Group's 400 plus hypermarkets. This results in extremely demanding distribution and processing needs as produce originally arrives at the hubs from a variety of suppliers with different packaging and carton sizes, as well as widely varied bar code resolutions and positioning. The complex sorting need is further intensified as perishables also need to be handled in a time-critical and temperature-sensitive process in order to ensure the goods arrive and leave for their hypermarket destinations in the best condition.

The growing market

To learn more about the size of the market, SCAN/DCR spoke with Gian Paolo Fedrigo, CEO of Datalogic Automation, the Datalogic division specialized in the Industrial Automation market and dedicated to traceability, inspection, detection and recognition in factory automation and logistics processes. He told us, "The law requiring food traceability in the supply chain has been in place since 2002. In Europe, it's more than simply

adhering to the law. Consumers and various agencies expect it. Grocers know that their customers are demanding accountability for where their fresh food has been and how long it took to get to the store. Yet, growers and those involved in distribution are still approaching the issue with caution. We need to show them the benefits they can receive beyond compliance. We expect to see significant growth in our sales to this market."

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**Gian Paolo Fedrigo, CEO,
Datalogic Industrial Automation.**

The integrator

During the implementation, Datalogic worked closely with systems integrator, **Actemium**. Members of the Actemium team said the intended goals were achieved through the use of Datalogic's system NVS9000. The NVS9000 offers high read rates and quality imaging. They added that the results were "extremely satisfying," and both companies hope to progress to further installations in other distribution sites.

The industrial high-end imaging system NVS9000 embeds the latest and most powerful vision technology on the market into a modular, easy and reliable product, delivering top reading performance, simple integration, and easy installation.

The system currently in place at the hypermarket's center involves five cameras covering five input areas, with an ability to scan and read all the items processed on the available sorting systems running at one meter per second, irrespective of size or bar code type.

In a further development, Datalogic's dimensioner DM3500 was also installed following a request by the customer for a product volume dimensioning solution. This optimizes the dispatch operation and provides data on pallets which can be used to determine truck size for delivery or shared consignments destined for specific hypermarkets.

The initial testing phase involved a competitive bid

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between Datalogic and two other suppliers. Datalogic said it won the order not only through the NVS9000's top industrial reliability and low customer total cost of ownership, but due also to the preferential service levels provided to the retailer prior to and during the test phase.

Machine vision leads to new opportunities

1D and 2D code readers are not the only option when dealing with food traceability. "We looked at both manufacturing and distribution processes and found that our machine vision offerings were a perfect match as well" said Fedrigo. "Through the use of a combination of bar code readers and machine vision technologies, we can support food traceability along the entire process, checking the quality and compliance to specifications during 'manufacturing', but also determine the location and the overall size and dimensions of packages, when it comes to the distribution and shipping operations. We can capture important information about the packaging, including if there is damage. We can monitor expiration dates and how long an item sat in one place.

Continuing, Fedrigo told us, "In food manufacturing areas, machine vision can be used to monitor a variety of process and spec compliances, and can even be used to capture the 'color' of food during the cooking process. For some prepared foods, a change in color means reaching the 'right status' as they are cooked. [Editor's note: We assume an analogy would be ordering a steak and being asked if you want it rare, medium rare, well-done, etc.] When it comes to the distribution processes, we are not tracking perishables at the item level. Rather, we

are using our technology to track and monitor packaging units, boxes and pallets. We can help our customers reduce their shipping and handling costs. In addition, shipping times are much more critical with perishables, and we can help reduce losses from spoilage. Businesses are gathering much more information, today. We can offer much more than simple bar code reading."

From field to table

Datalogic's strategy is to support traceability of perishable foods from the field to the supper table. "Thanks to the competencies of its divisions, Datalogic helps in addressing the movement of perishables thoroughly from the field through the distribution centers to and in the stores" said Fedrigo. "With dairy products, we start at the packaging/bottling companies. Our sophisticated system enables users to ID products 360 degrees. It also enables them to check weight, size, movement, and damages."

Closing

Before we ended our conversation, Fedrigo summarized, "We can read traditional bar codes and 2-D symbologies; we can perform dimensioning functions; and we can offer machine vision to capture even more pertinent information-through almost every phase of the manufacturing distribution process. Our customers view our technology as a competitive advantage."

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