

Puma Runs Fast and Sure with the Elf™

The Salzburg Austria Dassler Branch of Puma GesmbH uses Datalogic's Elf™ PDA to Run the Warehouse

PUMA is one of the world's leading sport lifestyle companies that designs and develops footwear, apparel and accessories. The Salzburg Branch of Puma in Austria handles inventory management for Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The 154 subsidiaries in these countries are connected to over 500 operators at the central office in Salzburg.

In order to meet the demands of the significant number of subsidiaries, inventory volumes are enormous at the warehouse in Salzburg. Management of all the operations needed to handle the goods, such as stock transfers, picking, goods output, inventory management and quality inspections, were becoming more and more difficult with the outdated system the company was using. Therefore, the Salzburg branch of Puma started to look for a new system that could handle large volumes quickly and efficiently. The company turned to Barcotec for a solution. Barcotec proposed a complete warehousing system with the Elf™ PDA from Datalogic.

Puma found the characteristics it was looking for in the Elf™. Certified with IP64 industrial protection class, the Elf™ is a very robust device, an essential feature in harsh warehouse environments. It also has extensive RAM, scans quickly with no errors and transfers collected data in real time. "Datalogic and its Partner, Barcotec, advised us very well, offering us the Elf™, which fully satisfied our requirements, all at a low cost to us," affirmed the Puma project manager in Salzburg.

The employees in the warehouse also appreciated the Elf™ immediately. This is also due to fact that some employees were given the possibility to test various devices in advance. "There are big differences in the handling," said one evaluator, "we wanted to test the PDA's in real environments. Only then could we be sure that the equipment would work perfectly with our lighting conditions and bar codes, as well as comply to all of our real business needs. Barcotec immediately gave us the opportunity to test several Elf's™, helping us with advice and support." The low weight and long battery life scored points from the start for employees that work long hours during the day. As a consequence, the first Elf's™ were soon sent out on their first mission. Currently, 70 Elf™ PDAs are used for online data collection in the warehouse.

The Elf™ connects to Puma locations all over the world about 100,000 times a day to indicate goods movement and request additional information through the ERP system. Puma employees pointed out that "this would definitely require a significant amount of time without an automated system, as we would have to record these transactions in the ERP system manually. The Elf™ keeps our data up to date in real time, simplifying our daily work process and saving time."

Each employee usually scans about 1000 times a day, making the Elf™ a constant companion in the warehouse. This is the reason why its light weight combined with excellent reading ability was so important. "Sometimes we literally scan every second, so we must have a PDA that can read 100% of the bar codes immediately without any delays. The Elf™ from Datalogic was exactly what we were looking for," mentioned one satisfied Puma employee.

As a progressive, dynamic company, it's also Puma's policy to work with modern technology. Puma's project manager pointed out some of the advantages that came with using the Elf™. "The built-in Green Spot technology produces a visual confirmation of a successful scan, which is very helpful when several people are working close together in the same area, making a confirmation beep insufficient. The audible beep alone can also create confusion. With the visual green spot confirmation, it's perfectly clear which device was successfully scanned." Another advantage was the Elf's™ large color screen. Puma's project manager went on to say, "an image is also displayed on the large color screen of the Elf™, so the employee can see what the product looks like, another very helpful advantage."

In the future, Salzburg will include the Elf™ in other international locations. The IT team at Puma affirmed, "our goal is to use the Elf™ in as many locations as possible. It simplifies our central maintenance, making it easier to handle all our warehouse operations."