

case study



GHG Logistics Keeps Sushi at the Peak of Freshness with LXE

NOTE: LXE's parent company, EMS Technologies, was acquired by Honeywell in August 2011.

When it comes to a product as sensitive and delicate as sushi, quality, freshness and authenticity are critical. When Whole Foods began to open stores in Philadelphia, in 1997, they visited many local sushi restaurants to find the best and most authentic establishment, ultimately selecting Genji, a home-town favorite.

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As Whole Foods Market grew, so did the number of Genji sushi bars; today, Genji operates more than 135 sushi bar locations in 18 states, the District of Columbia and in the United Kingdom, and is the largest sushi vendor within the Whole Foods Market chain.

Sushi chefs undergo rigorous training to reach the top of their craft, and require only the best ingredients at the peak of their freshness. Genji wanted to take it's outside third party provider distribution to the next level and decided to take distribution/transportation in-house, and formed GHG Logistics, a wholly owned subsidiary of Genji, to make it happen. They selected Allentown, Pennsylvania, as the ideal centralized location, and Richard Siegfried, Senior Manager of Warehousing and Distribution, had six months to build an entire warehouse operation from scratch.

To be at the peak of taste, the fish used in sushi must be maintained in exacting conditions. Genji's tuna, for example, is processed and superfrozen right on the boat within thirty minutes of a catch at -76°F. As soon as it reaches the dock, it's moved to -30°F trailers and then into the freezer in GHG Logistics' Allentown warehouse. The company purchased its own fleet of trucks with industry-leading triple-temperature storage compartments (ambient, +38°F and -30°F) to maintain the appropriate temperature of its goods. That enables complete deliveries of supplies and ingredients to each of Genji's Whole Foods locations once or twice a week.

GHG Logistics maintains 2,400 SKUs, including fish such as shrimp, salmon and crab, as well as rice, ginger, miso and other ingredients, in addition to packing containers and other non-food supplies. Each food package is labeled and date coded to help with inventory management as well as comply with the United States' Food and Drug Administration (FDA) date coding requirements.

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— Richard Siegfried, GHG Logistics, Senior Manager of Warehousing and Distribution

GHG Logistics's 40,000-square-foot warehouse includes a 3,000-square-foot racked refrigeration unit at +38°F and a 2,000-square-foot racked freezer unit at -30°F, where every type of ingredient used in the operation of sushi and Asian restaurants is stored. With a state-of-the-art warehouse management system in place to manage it all, the company needed a mobile computer that could survive movement into and out of those cold temperatures. Based on a positive relationship, Siegfried invited auto ID solution provider RMS Omega of White Marsh, Maryland, as well as a competitor to show them some options. "We wanted a piece of equipment that was able to work in cold temperatures and also in the cooler," Siegfried says.

Moving in and out of the cold all day typically creates condensation in computers, causing screens to fog up, keyboards to seize up, and internal parts to corrode. Cold storage operators like GHG Logistics need a device built to combat these problems, without separate heated boots or annual desiccant pack changes that can take a unit out of commission. RMS Omega Senior Account Manager, Bryan Hooper, suggested LXE mobile computers based on their proven durability and functionality in cold temperatures. "When dealing with a harsh environment, it becomes especially critical that we can offer a product that will hold up to our client's everyday working conditions while providing the functionality they need to be productive and efficient. The MX7CS from LXE is a great match for GHG Logistics," stated Hooper.

Making a Pick

When GHG Logistics tested the competing terminals, LXE's MX7CS performed the best, and RMS Omega completed the solution with configuration services, recommended site coverage for the GHG Logistics-installed wireless network, and ongoing support.

"From -30°F to ambient temperature is a 100-degree difference," Siegfried says. "We haven't seen any fogging on screens, and have had no issues with corrosion. It's lightweight, and we were very glad to see the ease of battery changing. Workers moving from one temperature zone to another may have their glasses fog up, but the screens remain clear. Everything that was promised, they've lived up to."

GHG Logistics uses its eight MX7CS terminals primarily throughout its case-picking operation, from receiving to putaway to picking to shipping. In the months since implementation, GHG Logistics has seen dramatic improvement in accuracy, an achievement Siegfried credits in part to the mobile computers and how easy they are to learn and use. Employees have adapted well.

In any operation, terminals will see wear and tear. The ability for a solution provider to perform vendor-authorized service and return the units with a one-day turnaround was an important priority for GHG Logistics. "Having a facility that's authorized to do repairs is definitely positive, especially for a smaller operation. It's not like we have 20 guns lying around," Siegfried says.

Long-term reliability was also a critical criterion in choosing a solution.

GHG Logistics is completely satisfied with both the MX7CS mobile computers and the support from RMS Omega. "Pricing is always an important part, but if you can't service it, what good is it? They've been very supportive, and if we have questions, even if it's something they're not a part of, they go the extra mile," Siegfried says. He also has good things to say about LXE and its mobile computers. "I would definitely recommend them, especially for cold environments. It's a very good product, and we're very pleased with the product itself and the service we've received."

Introducing Tecton CS



The Tecton CS hand-held, the successor to the MX7CS, provides the same durability, ergonomics, and ability to withstand low temperatures that helped GHG Logistics grow its business, but with enhanced speed using a PXA 320 806 MHz processor, and more efficient battery life, including a super-capacitor specially designed to hold its charge longer in cold storage environments. To learn more about the Tecton CS, please visit honeywellaidc.com.

For more information:

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