

After spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per tournament on a third-party scoring system, Manz and his team identified a need for a better technology solution when it came to scoring and data capture at some of the most well-known golf tournaments in the world.

They turned to Scan Read Technologies, a Florida-based company specializing in barcode and RFID technology, to work with them to deploy a new solution including the Intermec by Honeywell CN50 and CK71 rugged mobile computers.



The result? In excess of \$3 million in expected savings through 2016 – less than six years after deployment.

Boosting Technology

“We take great pride in our events, and being able to provide technology that improves the spectator experience is one of our biggest goals,” said Manz.

Before they engaged with Scan Read, Manz said the PGA’s scoring systems were managed by third parties. And, while he said it was a suitable way to facilitate tournament scoring, the PGA felt they could be better utilizing this spend elsewhere.

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“We were essentially paying \$120,000 to \$140,000 per tournament – costing us huge expenses that were basically detracting from other membership services we could deliver,” said Manz. “We saw that we could save upwards of \$3 million over the course of four years by investing in the construction of a new technology system of our own.”

Manz and his team engaged with Scan Read Technologies to provide guidance on the right hardware to augment the PGA’s in-house data-tracking software.

They engaged in a rigorous testing of several different handheld devices and

configurations, ultimately selecting the Intermec by Honeywell CN50s and CK71s for use in their high-stakes events. Once the optimum device configuration was achieved, Scan Read Technologies and Intermec by Honeywell assisted with the implementation and project management of the first big test, the 2012 Senior PGA Championship. This test allowed the team valuable insight into actual field operations of the total solution, including the software, hardware, and communications infrastructure, and support for the further deployment of SOTI device management software.

“We are now using the Intermec [by Honeywell] CK71s for scanning tickets at the entry gates, as well as the Intermec [by Honeywell] CN50s for all of our walking scorers to capture data,” said Manz.

Manz said they ultimately chose the Intermec by Honeywell solutions for several reasons: firstly, the ability to change carrier service if needed was critical. Other key factors included the long battery life, ease of deployment using management software and the rugged capability of the CN50’s design. The CK71 was also chosen for its exceptional battery life, high performance scanning capability and rugged design, along with ease of use by the volunteers.

The walking scorers use the CN50s to enter shot data in real-time, as it happens on the course, which transmits directly to the PGA’s group of on-site quality control experts.

“It’s absolutely crucial that all numbers are as accurate as possible because they are being fed in real-time to the media, including television, radio and Internet,” said Manz.

Because the PGA information technology team originally rented devices for scoring, configuration used to take place before each event. Moving to a purchased solution optimized the process by allowing the IT team to configure the CN50s before packing them up for the next event.

“Due to the reasonable pricing of the units, we were able to purchase them rather than renting. This allows us to pre-configure all of the units in the beginning of the year and permanently install management software and other security related packages that remain on each unit,” said Kevin Donohue, PGA Manager of Event Technology. “Once the configuration and packages that are common to all events are set, we can simply load event specific data before each event. What used to take several people up a full day or more in configuration before each event has been reduced to an hour or two – a significant time savings.”

Scoring, Simplified

Because the walking scorers are all volunteers, Manz knew whatever handheld computers they selected needed to be simple and easy to use.

“We could not afford to put on an event like this with anything other than volunteers,” said Manz. “We use anywhere from 3,000 to 4,000 volunteers for the week to help with tournaments and they are our eyes and ears on the course. We have to see that the computer system we use is intuitive and that volunteers can be trained and spun up to speed in a very short amount of time.”

Volunteers only get 45-minutes of training in a group session a few days before and are asked to score at least three holes of a practice round. However, many volunteers are unable to participate in either of these training sessions and then must be trained within hours of the scheduled tee times.

Additionally, Manz noted that both the software and hardware needed to pair together and be simple enough to make the volunteers proficient their first time out.

“We are very satisfied with the devices. The Windows Mobile 6.5 OS is easy to program and is a familiar platform for our volunteers to use,” said Donohue. “In addition, the battery life is superior to previous generations of similar devices. In the past, we had to schedule battery changes half way through a round of golf. Now we often complete an entire round of golf, sometimes lasting up to five hours, with more than 50 percent of the battery still remaining.”

And, due to the outdoor environment in which the handhelds are used, ruggedness was also a key factor.

Donohue added, “We have had issues with environmental conditions affecting other devices adversely. In the past,

we have actually come up short on devices due to some being taken out of production as a direct result of water damage to the touch screen.”

Donohue said this is no longer the case.

“The Intermec [by Honeywell] devices’ ability to handle weather is impressive. During the 2012 PGA Championship in Kiawah Island, South Carolina, we endured several days of very heavy rain,” said Donohue. “And when the rain finally stopped, we had heat coupled with high humidity. The devices had been soaked, cooked in the sun, dropped, you name it. But through it all, we had zero issues with the Intermec [by Honeywell] devices.”

Clear Results

“At the end of the day, our ultimate goal is to provide the best possible experience to our members and paying spectators, and an innovative yet easy-to-use technology that we can rely on day in and day out, has helped us do just that,” said Manz.

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