Zekelman Industries Upgrades to an Integrated Android Mobile Solution with Advice and Support from Levata.

Zekelman Industries is the largest independent steel pipe and tube manufacturer in North America with operations across 17 manufacturing locations in the U.S. and Canada. To meet demand from its market, Zekelman manages a large volume of raw materials and finished structural steel and pipe inventory. Levata enabled a faster, easier, more accurate inventory transaction solution with improved security, and long-term support.

Business Challenge

In the 1990s, Zekelman custom-built and deployed a Windows CE application to collect inventory data and log transactions in its enterprise resource planning system. Recently, however, Zekelman struggled to keep its inventory management system running smoothly. The mobile devices the company was using were no longer supported by their manufacturers, and even refurbished products were unavailable on the market. As a result, the company didn't have enough devices for its mobile users.

Industry: Manufacturing

Capability: Enterprise Mobility

Application: Android mobile hardware and a new inventory management app

Challenge: Legacy devices were no longer supported or available in the market, and the company's Windows CE app was costly and time-consuming to maintain

Featured Solution: Android mobile devices, Mobile Device Management, Thermal tags

Key Benefits: The new solution enables faster, easier, more accurate inventory transactions, security improvements, and long-term support

Additionally, the company no longer had in-house Windows CE development resources to update its custom applications, troubleshoot, or retire unnecessary features, so maintenance was costly. The outdated system also created security vulnerabilities, putting the company at risk for malware attacks and data breaches.

The Solution

Levata helped Zekelman migrate to new and widely supported Android mobile solutions. A consultant created a mobile app that takes advantage of new Android devices while maintaining integration with Zekelman's existing business processes and ERP backend connection. The company also ensured Zekelman's internal development team could support the app moving forward. This allowed Zekelman to significantly boost its device and authentication security while ensuring its software is supported and can be developed and maintained for years into the future.

Levata assisted Zekelman with deploying mobile computers to equip employees with rugged tools with multiple connectivity options for reliable performance. Zekelman also chose a mobile device management solution to ensure that its IT team could centrally manage the devices and app across all of its sites and opted to take advantage of a program through Levata for device service.

Levata also custom-designed a two-part label/tag system using thermal transfer tags and labels. This system created a peel-off part of the label for tracking and permanent tags used on steel rolls. As part of a media contract, Levata will keep label and tag inventory on hand, providing peace of mind that they'll be available on demand.

Benefits and Results

The modern Android mobile devices and new mobile app enhance user experiences and deliver easier, more accurate inventory transactions. The system is also efficient, fully integrating with existing backend processes.

In addition, the new solution allows Zekelman to save on support and mobile hardware costs by using Levata for technical support, service management, and repair triage.

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> We purchased blocks of hours for Levata to provide prompt support and service on demand if questions or issues arise or a device needs repairs. It's all part of a complete solution that has allowed us to simplify its mobile solution management while reducing our costs.
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> – IT Project Leader at Zekelman Industries

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