

CASE STUDY

Barcoding and Zebra Technologies Help Fleet Farm Migrate and Modernize for a More Efficient Future with Android

How Standardization Maximized an Investment in Modernization



Background

Fleet Farm is a large Midwestern retailer that sells a variety of inventory, from outdoor products and automotive supplies to home improvement goods and more. Its huge selection and reputation for quality has earned Fleet Farm a loyal customer base as the go-to retailer for the jobs and joys of daily life.

In 2018, Fleet Farm became a Barcoding customer with a mobile refresh to replace aging equipment, implementing new technology at 37 existing stores, five new stores and a distribution center. From there, the team at Barcoding has worked with Fleet Farm to apply its expertise in migration and modernization to help the retailer go a step above and beyond embracing new technology, helping them maximize their investment and deliver on key results.



AT A GLANCE

Background

Fleet Farm is a large Midwestern retailer that sells a variety of inventory. In 2018, Fleet Farm became a Barcoding customer with a mobile refresh to replace aging equipment, implementing new technology at 42 stores and a distribution center.

Challenges

Fleet Farm has grown rapidly, adding four to five stores each year. In order to maintain and exceed the level of quality and service, Fleet Farm needed to overhaul its inventory management device solution.

Solution

The Zebra Technologies devices offered an all-in-one answer to the previously unconsolidated device solution that Fleet Farm had been using.

Results

In creating a unified development platform, Fleet Farm consolidated its teams' expertise around Android for more efficient growth. This created a more seamless application experience for both Fleet Farm employees and customers.

Fleet  Farm.

Challenges

By offering competitive prices for its high-quality inventory, Fleet Farm has grown rapidly, adding four to five stores each year. In order to maintain and exceed the level of quality and service customers had come to expect, Fleet Farm needed to overhaul its inventory management device solution.

On the floor, employees were often burdened by as many as three separate pieces of hardware—a two-way radio for internal communications, a dated inventory scanning device for inventory counts, and a VOIP phone for internal/external communication. Fleet Farm needed an all-in-one mobile solution that could handle the many use cases store associates encountered on a daily basis.



Beyond this mobile solution, Fleet Farm sought results that were not one-size-fits-all. Fleet Farm wanted to improve their employees' effectiveness. The organization wanted to use technology to

heighten customer experience. It needed a partner that could help anticipate and address the needs of its operation as it scaled, while offering insights and expertise to help navigate the many options available for inventory management once a new system was in place. It needed strategic insight on standardization and guidance on the best path for migration to ensure optimal modernization.

After a comprehensive search, Fleet Farm decided to engage Barcoding, Inc. Barcoding has extensive experience in planning and managing large-scale device deployments and understands how to tailor, streamline and standardize a solution that fits within a company's operations system and is suited to its unique needs. In addition, Barcoding has a long-standing relationship with multiple hardware and software vendors and has a history of leveraging their expertise.

Solutions

Fleet Farm and Barcoding ran through multiple proofs of concept to test the utility and efficacy of various solutions. After comparing and contrasting the relative strengths of different offerings, they decided that Zebra would be best suited to meet Fleet Farm's particular needs. Barcoding's long-standing partnership with Zebra ensured that the solution would be integrated with the highest level of understanding, with the ability to capitalize on the newest and most important features Zebra had to offer.

The Zebra devices offered an all-in-one answer to the previously unconsolidated device solution that Fleet Farm had been using. In addition to a new mobile solution, Barcoding worked with Zebra to implement Android as the sole operating system for tablets, price check kiosks, and other endpoints across the business, opening the door for new applications to improve operations. In addition to the implementation, Fleet Farm went the extra mile to build a stronger partnership between store teams through conversations and projects that created a more effective workflow for the users who would be interacting with the devices on a daily basis.

For Barcoding and for Fleet Farm, this hardware refresh and implementation presented a larger opportunity. Rather than go the route of simply running the same applications year after year, they wanted to take advantage of the latest innovations that new, tailored applications could offer.

“Fleet Farm took the initiative to seek out new applications to maximize its investment and bring the best possible solution to the organization. That’s why we selected them as our 2019 Innovator of the Year.”

— **SHANE SNYDER**
President, Barcoding, Inc.

“Fleet Farm took the initiative to seek out new applications to maximize its investment and bring the best possible solution to the organization,” said Shane Snyder, president of Barcoding. “That’s why we selected them as our 2019 Innovator of the Year.” Barcoding presents the annual Innovator of the Year Award to an organization that has demonstrated an exemplary commitment to being more efficient, accurate, and connected.

Results

The devices Fleet Farm utilizes today are loaded with powerful business tools, such as Workforce Connect, which enable voice communications between employees, the payroll application, inventory management application, price checking capabilities, a camera for taking photos of damaged items or shelves that need attention, and a host of other built-in technologies for greater business intelligence.

In creating a unified development platform, Fleet Farm consolidated its teams’ expertise around Android for more efficient growth. This, in turn, created a more seamless application experience for both Fleet Farm employees and customers. They have also created a stronger partnership between store team members, corporate and IT staff.

“Barcoding has been a great partner in helping us decide on and standardize our use of the Android platform,” said Chris Zimmerman, IT manager for Fleet Farm. “It’s allowed my development team to focus their skills on development for a single platform rather than splitting their energy.”

As a result of the streamlined device solution, the Fleet Farm team has been able to rapidly develop around the platform to produce, in tandem with Barcoding, innovative applications and features driven by the company’s business goals.

“We’re doing things with the Zebra devices that have never been done before,” said Zimmerman. “Barcoding was able to provide personalized support while coordinating with Zebra to help bring our vision to life and solve the issues we were seeing across our stores.”



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— **CHRIS ZIMMERMAN**
IT Manager, Fleet Farm

About Barcoding, Inc.

Barcoding is a supply chain automation and innovation company that helps organizations be more efficient, accurate and connected. With extensive subject matter expertise in data capture, labeling and printing, and mobile computing, we are trusted to build and manage solutions for some of the best IT and operations teams in the world. Founded in 1998, Barcoding is headquartered in Baltimore, Md., with offices across North America (Chicago, Houston, Seattle, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver). For more information, visit www.barcoding.com.

About Zebra Technologies

Zebra Technologies builds enterprise-level data capture and automatic identification solutions that provide businesses with operational visibility. Zebra printers, mobile computers, scanners, software and more keep businesses smart and connected. Zebra's tracking and visibility solutions transform the physical to digital in Healthcare, Retail, Hospitality, Transportation and Logistics, and Manufacturing. For more information, visit www.zebra.com.

About Fleet Farm

Fleet Farm has served hardworking Midwestern families since 1955, offering a unique mix of high-quality, value-priced merchandise and services for active, outdoor, suburban, and farm communities. Customers can find fishing, hunting, and outdoor products, auto parts, farm and pet supplies, home improvement and household goods, clothing and footwear, toys and food, plus services like gas, car wash, and auto repair. Fleet Farm has 45 locations across the Midwest. The company's headquarters is in Appleton, Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.fleetfarm.com.