Solar powered success

Industry   Automotive

Market   Vehicle Storage and Handling

Applications   Inventory Management
Job Tracking

Products   Intermec 2101 Access Point
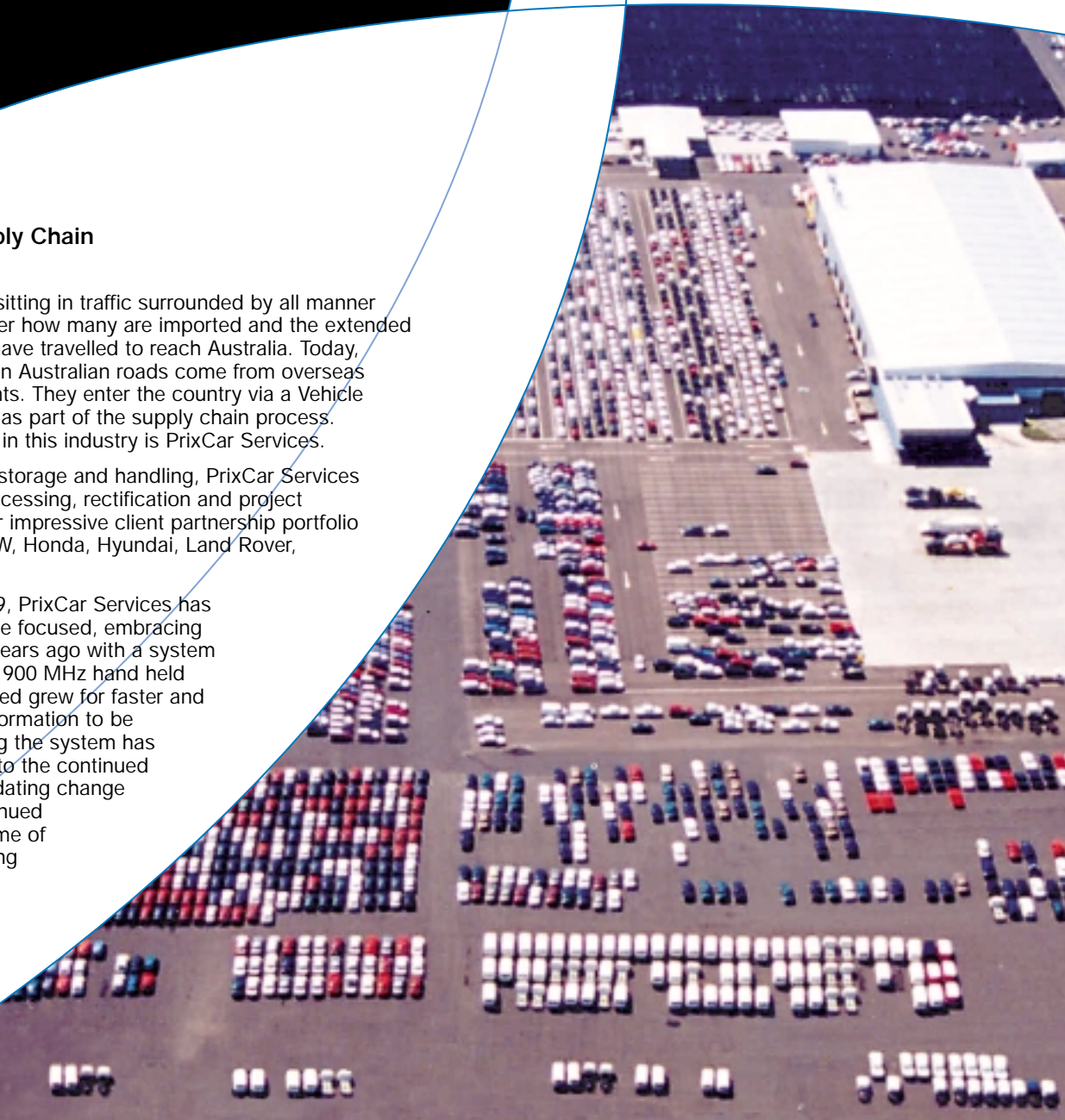Intermec 2425 Hand Held

ɣSolutions

Driving the Supply Chain

Next time you are sitting in traffic surrounded by all manner of vehicles, consider how many are imported and the extended journey they may have travelled to reach Australia. Today, 60% of new cars on Australian roads come from overseas manufacturing plants. They enter the country via a Vehicle Processing Centre as part of the supply chain process. One of the leaders in this industry is PrixCar Services.

Leading in vehicle storage and handling, PrixCar Services provide vehicle processing, rectification and project management. Their impressive client partnership portfolio includes Audi, BMW, Honda, Hyundai, Land Rover, Lexus and Volvo.

Established in 1989, PrixCar Services has always been service focused, embracing technology many years ago with a system that was based on 900 MHz hand held computers. The need grew for faster and more advanced information to be handled. Upgrading the system has proven imperative to the continued growth, accommodating change and ensuring continued performance in some of the most challenging conditions.

Driving the Supply Chain

To meet with the ever-increasing volumes in the supply chain and to deliver a continued competitive service, Keith Ross, General Manager of PrixCar Services, identified the need for a system upgrade. Gamma Solutions, one of Intermec's most experienced providers of wireless solutions, was selected to develop the system by replacing existing units and introducing a fully integrated and supported data collection system.

Gamma Solutions' expertise in the wireless industry proved that IEEE 802.11b was the industry standard today and the way forward with technology.

But first, the new solution had many issues to resolve. Any system chosen would require it to be integrated completely and seamlessly. It would also need to provide capabilities for tracking information for various business units so that they could perform tasks in the most efficient manner.

Double handling of orders and the use of paper reports created unacceptably long periods of delay, and the solution would need to remedy this.

An even greater problem to overcome was the lack of mains power and data cabling over such large premises. Access to mains power for operation of computer equipment was not an option. Therefore a "unique" solution was required to resolve this problem. Gamma's innovative cure to this was a self contained, solar powered "truly" wireless station, which provided uninterrupted remote power and wireless connectivity. Strategically placed throughout the facility, solar powered access points saved considerable dollars in time, effort and efficiency.

Keith Ross explains how the process works. "The vehicle is first surveyed on the dock as it is discharged from the vessel. Once the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) barcode is scanned using the Intermec 2425 terminal, the updated information is recorded via the host system, which communicates back to the vehicle processing facility. This information can include where the vehicle is to be transferred, the condition of the vehicle and any special orders required in processing.

On arrival at the selected warehouse or relevant destination, the vehicles are again scanned to record time of delivery. Warehouse processing services comply with both customs and local regulations and need to accommodate for the various changes required to meet regulations in line with the Australian market.

Thousands of cars are moved through the processing and storage facilities that extend, in some states, well over 30 hectares of land. For easy retrieval and identification, the

vehicles are parked and recorded in a grid pattern. To ensure ease of locating vehicles a location ID code is recorded with the Intermec terminal.

At any time the VIN ID code is keyed or scanned into the Intermec terminal, the location and history details of each vehicle, such as "7.05am parked on lot Y38, at 9.30am detailed and 2.00pm dispatched", are recorded.

Keith Ross explains other advantages and the value in the new system. "One key advantage of the real-time system is to identify the key points of transition of responsibility. Throughout the supply chain, responsibility is passed along to the different service companies, therefore it is imperative to know the time and condition when the responsibility for the vehicle changed hands."

Gamma Solutions and Intermec worked with PrixCar to upgrade the previous hardware system and enable a visible path of progression that would be adaptable to new technologies over time.

Keith Ross said, "Gamma Solutions were selected for their professionalism, innovative design and tailored maintenance services. Intermec Technologies' hardware was selected because of the battery power management and uncompromised data collection capabilities of the 2425 rugged terminal, which proved to be especially beneficial in long shifts and remote areas. The robust design remains reliable in all weather conditions and in harsh indoor and outdoor environments."

"Gamma Solutions offered reliable equipment with the right coverage for PrixCar's specific requirements. Should technical advice or assistance be needed for the frontline worker there was also the reassurance of 24 hour technical support nationally", he added. "Upgrading the system increased the level of service throughout the supply chain and resulted in increased accuracy and maximised time and cost efficiencies, with the added benefit of being able to communicate effortlessly to current and new business partners," Keith concluded.

Now, as you sit in traffic noticing the vehicles around you, remember that some of those vehicles, and possibly your own, may have reached the road with the help of PrixCar Services, and in turn were tracked and recorded by the innovative solution created by the team at Gamma Solutions and Intermec.

Intermec 2101 Access Point
• High speed wireless access
• Enterprise roaming
• Radio Independent ™
• 10/100 Ethernet
• Dual radio capability
• -25° to 65°C

Intermec 2425 Hand Held
• Telnet, VT / 5250
• 2.4GHz Radio, 1.6 to 11 Mbps
• Inbuilt scanning options
• Large, high contrast display
• Rugged casing, IP54 Sealed
• -20º to 50ºC