



PARTNER SUCCESS



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study is an example of how Ai2's solutions are used in the distribution marketplace to solve technology problems and help distributors grow their business. Through the use of Ai2's solutions one particular organization freed themselves from the limitations of older technology and positioned themselves to capture more business.

"Every salesman was wasting an hour a day. Customers didn't use the Telxons we gave them."

"We're always improving our technology and Ai2 is helping to prepare us for the future."

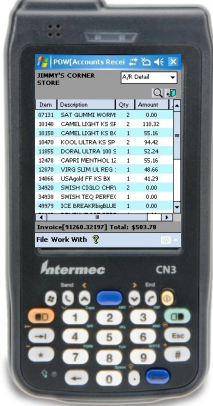
Harold Levinson Associates (HLA) is among the northeast United States' largest convenience distributors. Based in Farmingdale, New York, the company employs 420 people, about 70 of whom are outside sales reps. A few years ago, those reps were using Telxon technology to capture and transmit orders. This posed several problems.

"Every salesman was **wasting an hour a day** looking for a payphone or re-sending orders," says Michael Berro, Director of Special Projects for HLA. "Some of our customers had Telxons too, but they didn't like the fact that they couldn't see what they were ordering." Berro acknowledged that some of those customer Telxons sat unused in the stores.

The Telxons HLA was using could not scan UPCs, so if a shelf tag was missing, the customer had to go look up the item in a big price book. This was inefficient and, as Berro put it, **"If my customer is mad at my handheld, he's mad at me."**

The outdated Telxon technology affected almost every aspect of HLA's operation. Since orders required double-checking and human intervention, **a lot of customer service time was wasted.** There was also downtime in the warehouse while the staff waited for the system to process orders.

HLA evaluated several software vendors to replace the Telxons with a newer solution. Berro says they chose Ai2 because **"we felt comfortable** with them. We knew they were willing to build to our needs instead of just giving us a standard program that couldn't change. Ai2 was committed to giving us **the exact solution we needed** and that they wouldn't stop until we were satisfied."



Ai2 PARTNER SUCCESS

HLA decided to implement **two solutions from Ai2**: Pocket OrderWriter® (POW®) for their sales force and Automated Customer Entry (ACE™) for customers. Both solutions run in a Windows Mobile environment and give the user the opportunity to **communicate regularly** with HLA's host computer system. Both solutions scan UPCs.

Sales reps communicate via the same data network that smartphones use, while customers can send orders with the existing Internet connection in their stores.

The effect on HLA's business was swift and significant.

"The orders get to the system faster, our customer service department doesn't get overwhelmed with calls, and each of our salespeople **saved an hour a day**," said Berro.

What's more, "our salespeople can **see all their pre-book orders** and manage them effectively." Overseeing the distribution of manufacturer-sponsored programs is a major part of an HLA salesperson's responsibility, and used to take more time before the deployment of POW.

As for ongoing support of the software, "We've **never had a problem linger with Ai2**, which is important because we can't afford to have our system down for very long." Both ACE and POW are "feature-rich but still easy to use," according to Berro.

Customer order entry with ACE has led to **larger orders for each customer, and a convenient approach** for doing business with HLA that fosters customer loyalty.

Moving ahead, Ai2 and HLA look forward to a long and profitable partnership. "Ai2 is developing a solution for our drivers that will **save them time and paperwork** on a daily basis," commented Berro.

The future is bright for a company that's "always improving our technology."

Before Ai2 Solutions

- Old, unreliable handheld technology
- Unavoidable downtime in the warehouse
- Technology not contributing to growth
- Manual management of pre-book campaigns

After Ai2 Deployment

- Salespeople save 1 hour or more per day
- Larger orders
- Fewer order entry errors
- Improved fill rate
- More efficient operations
- Less strain on customer service

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