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-BOB DANAHY, DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL MOBILE AND WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY, ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES

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-JIM HILTON, DIRECTOR INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS GROUP, SYMBOL TECHNOLOGIES

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Zebra Technologies, Corp and Symbol Technologies, Inc.

A fundamental shift is under way when it comes to delivery and service operations in the beverage industry. “Companies should no longer look at direct store delivery as a cost of doing business,” says Bob Danahy, director of global mobile and wireless technology for Zebra Technologies. “With the tools offered by the team of **Zebra and Symbol Technologies**, route accounting becomes a profit center. Drivers can provide additional services and reduce wait times through better control over pricing and inventory.”

“Together Zebra and Symbol provide the next generation of integrated business solutions,” says Jim Hilton, director industry solutions group at Symbol. “We offer advanced solutions for automation throughout the entire supply chain, from mobile handheld computers to table-top products at distribution and production sites.”

Symbol and Zebra have a rich heritage of jointly providing bar code and enterprise mobility solutions for the past 15 years. The two companies recently announced a global partnering agreement to collaborate on consistent and joint solution development from concept through deployment. Zebra has provided innovative and reliable bar code and specialty label printing solutions to businesses and governments in 90 countries around the world for more than three decades. Symbol, “The Enterprise Mobility Company”™, is a global leader in delivering reader and scanner products that capture, move and manage information in real time.

The latest product from this alliance is Zebra’s RW 420 mobile and wireless printer combined with Symbol’s MC9000 series and MC50 handheld computers for direct store delivery applications. “Because of our collaborative engineering efforts, there are no moldings and fittings to worry about,” says Hilton. “The devices work together seamlessly.”

The dot matrix printers on the streets today use ribbon and are prone to frequent service. “We have recently seen a rapid transition to the use of thermal printing in this market,” says Danahy. “The RW 420 is a thermal printer optimized for use in rugged environments. It has fewer moving parts and a compact design with a large angled LCD display, enabling users to do their jobs easily without interruption or maintenance downtime.” The RW also doesn’t require ink or ribbons and the print media is less expensive.

“We developed the RW 420 by going out and riding with the drivers who are doing the route accounting,” adds Danahy. “We responded to their needs by putting it through rigorous testing under all sorts of weather conditions. The RW 420 was proven to meet the IP54 standard of environmental compliance.”

The smaller, reliable mobile printers are user-friendly, save on paper, and can process real-time invoicing, sales orders, estimates, and secure credit verification, shaving days off account receivables and boosting cash flow. The print quality is consistently legible, and the paper is UV-coated which allows the media to be stored and maintained without fading or discoloring.

“Management of the devices over the network is very important to both Zebra and Symbol,” says Danahy. “When you deploy multiple pieces of highly technical equipment, your IT staff needs to be able to communicate with those devices in a simple way, uploading on a daily basis. Our new device management software enables users to monitor both the RW 420 and the handheld computer together.”

Zebra and Symbol are also full service providers, providing joint service at a single point of contact for support and maintenance, quicker problem resolution, and project advancement. “We can deal with our customers globally,” says Danahy. “That means you have one touch point for service of the overall solution.” ■