Intermec company

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A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z Intermec Technologies Corporation

Interface Mechanics Inc. (later known simply as Intermec) was established in 1966 after the The National Association of Food Chains (NAFC) called for equipment manufacturers to develop systems that would speed the checkout process. Comprising a handful of people working from a renovated grocery store in Mountlake Terrace, Washington, the company quickly unveiled a number of "firsts" in a newly emerging technology sector. In the process, Intermec left a lasting mark on the retail industry.

The company"s earliest innovations included the first hand-held order-entry terminal in 1969, as well as the first portable bar code scanner and the first on-demand bar code label printer in 1971. The following year, Intermec unveiled the first computerized cash register. This development was proceeded by the invention of "Interleaved 2 of 5" symbology, which eventually became the standard that supermarkets use to mark cardboard boxes with barcodes.

In 1973 Dr. David C. Allais, who had joined Intermec in 1968, was named company president. The following year he worked with bar code industry pioneer Raymond L. Stevens to invent Code 39, which became the world"s most widely used alphanumeric bar code symbology. In April 1970, Stevens had founded TEMA, a Natick, Massachusetts-based company that ultimately became Intermec"s largest and oldest dedicated distributor.

Other pioneering developments occurred at Intermec during the late 1970s, including the invention of Code 11, which was widely adopted by the telecommunications industry. Intermec also developed hand-held computers that wholesale route distributors used to perform accounting functions. By the late 1970s, Intermec employed roughly 50 people.

Explosive Growth in the 1980s

Intermec"s role as a technology pioneer continued throughout the 1980s. During the decade, the company emerged as a comprehensive producer of bar code equipment. Led by President David C. Allais, Intermec"s products were adopted for use in such industry sectors as government and healthcare.

In 1981 the company unveiled the first on-demand direct thermal bar code printer. The following year, Intermec invented so-called "smart battery" technology, which would find widespread adoption in such portable electronic devices as camcorders and laptop computers. A high-density barcode printer capable of printing up to ten lines of regular text was introduced to the grocery industry in mid-1982.

Intermec"s sales grew from $14.3 million in 1982 to $20.7 million in 1983. In April of that year, the company acquired Ultra Print Tape & Label Corporation, which produced specialty labels and tags for bar coding and other purposes. Also that year Intermec rolled out a user program development tool called Interactive Reader Language (IRL). According to Intermec, the introduction of IRL was significant because it marked "the first time local prompting and editing could be done for bar code data entry and allowed a simple PC, rather than a large mainframe, to run an application." This milestone was followed by Intermec"s 1984 invention of the removable hard drive, which found a sizable market during the 1990s and beyond as the use of servers and laptop computers skyrocketed.

Intermec"s sales climbed to $26.9 million in 1984. In April the company loaned $700,000 to the bar code software firm Data Collection Systems Inc. (DCSI) in exchange for a 40-percent ownership stake and an option to acquire the remaining 60 percent in 1988. DCSI specialized in bar code data collection systems for the manufacturing sector. Combined with Intermec"s hardware offering, it became possible for Intermec to offer a packaged data collection solution to its customers.

In early 1984 Intermec signed two long-term agreements with Sperry Corporation, valued at $10 million, to provide the U.S. Air Force with bar code equipment. The company also signed a one-year, $2 million deal with IBIS Corporation to provide equipment to the U.S. Army. Intermec then expanded into two additional buildings near its 75,200-square-foot Lynnwood, Washington headquarters. The expansion added some 50,000 square feet of additional space for engineering, manufacturing, and marketing staff. This was followed by physical expansion at Cincinnati-based subsidiary INTERMEC/Ultra Print Inc., which planned to more than double its office and manufacturing facility in Union Township, Ohio.