

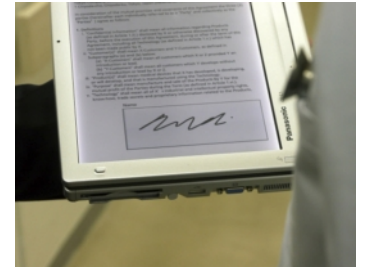


L'ORÉAL CZECH REPUBLIC HAS ONCE AGAIN SELECTED RUGGED PANASONIC TOUGHBOOKS FOR ITS SALES REPRESENTATIVES.

L'Oréal, a company which has been focusing on cosmetics research, development, and sales for over one hundred years, has equipped more than 60 sales representatives with the rugged Panasonic Toughbook CF-C1 convertible tablet. This ruggedized mobile solution enables complex operations with online information, higher-quality product presentations and a more effective ordering process. Sales representatives synchronize their Toughbooks with the central system daily and submit orders immediately with minimal delay, predominantly using a 3G mobile network. Mobile technology has enabled them to streamline their work significantly.

L'ORÉAL

TOUGHBOOK



Sales representatives can further improve the efficiency of their work thanks to the Panasonic Toughbook CF-C1.

L'Oréal has been engaged in the research, development, and sale of cosmetics for over one hundred years. One of the pillars of this company's market success is its sales force: the first line of contact with existing and potential customers. More than 60 sales representatives who spend their working day in the field can now take advantage of a new durable mobile solution, the ruggedized Panasonic Toughbook CF-C1 convertible tablet. The client solution enables complex operations with online information, higher-quality product presentations, and a more effective ordering process.

L'Oréal and cosmetics

L'Oréal is the global leader in the cosmetics field with consolidated sales of €17.5 billion for the year 2009 and operations in 130 countries. For more than a hundred years this company has been directing its knowledge and research outcomes towards products which bring a feel good factor to men and women around the world. The Czech branch of L'Oréal began operations in 1994, first focusing on the consumer market. In the span of a year it expanded its portfolio to professional products intended for use in cosmetics salons and from the turn of the century to dermocosmetics and luxury products.

Tech support in the field

Five years ago, all client information processing was carried out by the sales representative, using paper and phones. The time-consuming and often out-of-date nature of this approach limited their ability to provide customers with up-to-date information and restricted them to familiarising customers with products solely with the help of verbal and brochure-based promotion. No online inventory status reports, detailed lists, or supplemental information was available in the field. These drawbacks were eradicated in 2007 with the implementation of the Panasonic Toughbook CF-T5 and CF-T7 ruggedized business computers, which allowed sales representatives to benefit from all the advantages of having online access to required information. A significant improvement in the effectiveness of sales representatives and the ordering process was achieved using mobile technology. Sales teams synchronized their Toughbooks with the central system daily and submitted orders immediately or with only a small delay, predominantly through a 3G mobile network.

Careful selection

Careful selection of suitable hardware took place as part of the transition to a digital solution. L'Oréal considered a wide variety of options from personal organizers to lightweight notebooks and rugged Panasonic Toughbook devices.

The selection process included devices from leading brands. In addition to communication using 3G and WiFi networks, a high level of durability, long battery life and a sufficiently large display with touchscreen support, ergonomic design and the ability to use required programming equipment also formed important criteria.

Software specifications were linked to the sales representatives' need to use computers not merely to record orders but also to present products to customers, including the ability to play demo animations and film sequences. Another fundamental consideration wasn't the initial purchase price, but the total cost of ownership and the requirement of a minimum four-year lifespan for the device. Representatives of L'Oréal agreed that a cheap solution would not be able to accommodate all their requirements while maintaining a low failure rate. The ruggedized Toughbook CF-T5 and CF-T7 computers became the continual winner of internal testing not only because they fulfilled qualitative requirements, but also due to Panasonic's customer-oriented approach. Panasonic Toughbook closely cooperated with L'Oréal during testing and software modifications leading to the creation of their own operating system profile including software.

Exchange within a few days

Three divisions of the L'Oréal company use ruggedized solutions from the Panasonic corporation in similar ways, and yet minor distinctions exist. Thanks to the custom-modified MyAvis applications from Kvados, individual specifications pose no problems. After more than four years and detailed testing of the Panasonic Toughbook CF-C1 convertible tablet, a generational exchange of previously used models took place in 2011. Select criteria were updated in the process - for example, a requirement for maximum battery life enabling computer operation during all business hours was met by the new model's independent second battery with the additional option of charging in the car during trips between customers.

The new solution based on the CF-C1 model was implemented in record time: no more than a single business day was needed for each division. Sales representatives were invited to a collective meeting, arriving with their old computers, and after a brief introduction they left with the new model.

In addition to high durability and two batteries that can be exchanged during operations, users appreciate the light weight of the new solution and the exceptional ergonomics of the device - thanks to special hinges, the sales representatives can hold the computer in one hand and fully control it with the other. This characteristic can be useful when visiting sales locations and checking shelves while recording notes for the next order.

The more accurate touchscreen is also positively rated, as well as its very good readability in direct sunlight. Another advantage is the easy-to-remove hard disk which sales representatives can always carry with them and thereby protect sensitive data. "The individual features we required create a unique whole which the Panasonic Toughbook has achieved. These ruggedized computers have a generational advantage over other competitors, and with each subsequent generation the advancement of the Panasonic engineers and the improvement of the device, can be seen," says Martin Vamera, who, as IT manager for the Czech and Slovak Republics, was responsible for the project.

Reliable long-term cooperation

It's no simple task to build a quality client IT environment for sales representatives who spend all day in the field. For end users it's important to meet reliability requirements but also evolutionary refinement by taking specific user comments into consideration. This aspect is rated highly for Panasonic products by L'Oréal. The new generation of Panasonic Toughbook CF-C1 tablets are proof that the Panasonic company truly thinks about realistic situations which challenge many workers in the field. L'Oréal also appreciates the very close cooperation on a pan-European level; the company is already a long-time key customer of the Panasonic group. The quality of Toughbook computers is also underscored by the fact that L'Oréal's first generation solution - based on the CF-T5 and CF-T7 models - was used almost 20% longer than the planned three-year period. Altogether Panasonic Toughbook computers have been very positively received in the L'Oréal company both by sales representatives and management at an individual level.

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