



SUMMARY

**Customer**

ArcBest
Fort Smith, Arkansas

Partner

Professional Services

Industry

Logistics

Challenge

Deliver customer shipments faster and more efficiently, while creating better end user experiences, deploying next-gen applications, and more reliably sharing load, delivery, route, and customer information.

Solution

- Zebra TC75 Touch Computer
- Zebra TC75x Touch Computer
- Zebra TC77 Touch Computer
- Zebra L10 Rugged Tablet
- Zebra Professional Services
- Zebra Workforce Connect PTT Pro

Results

- Enhances operations with dependable, versatile solutions that support an evolving line of proprietary applications
- Reduces total cost of ownership by deploying rugged technologies that reduce repair and replacement costs
- Eliminates obstacles to mission-critical initiatives for faster, more efficient freight delivery
- Increases end user satisfaction with increased functionality and reliability
- Stronger technology alliances deliver faster deployments, better support and a clear roadmap for current and future optimizations

Delivering Efficiency Advances Employee Satisfaction for ArcBest

ArcBest uses Zebra rugged handhelds and tablets to support drivers and dock workers.

Since 1962, ArcBest Technologies has provided technical expertise for ArcBest and ABF Freight, supporting the business' technology needs and helping to provide the framework for shipping processes. Today, its IT development staff has nearly 250 members who handle app development and provide for the technological needs of the company. ArcBest's investments into technology infrastructure and expertise have placed it at the forefront of its industry, providing it a decisive advantage.

The company's commitment to leveraging high-performance technologies across its operations has also left a significant impression on its staff. Employees across business areas—including drivers and dock workers—often spend their entire careers with the company. ArcBest credits its ability to consistently empower employees with the latest tools as a key factor for driving their satisfaction and retention.

In addition to being employee centric, ArcBest prioritizes customer experience at each of its 20,000 daily pickups. Its customers want to know their freight is going to be delivered on time and intact, and ArcBest wants to provide that visibility.

When ArcBest decided to retire legacy mobile computers, it aimed to adopt leading-edge solutions that can continue to support its operations well into its next evolution. The company required Android™-based technologies to support its in-house, proprietary apps. It needed to provide reliable, rugged, and function-rich devices to its drivers and dock workers so they can access and share shipment information easily, as well as be more productive.

“Even though ArcBest had been an early adopter of paperless technologies in its asset-based operations, it was time to upgrade our current hardware and software,” says Lee Easley, Director of Information Services at ArcBest Technologies. “The age of our existing hardware was preventing us from achieving higher standards of functionality and user experience.”

“We often work in a very harsh environment, and Zebra devices have definitely held their own. Things happen in the city and on the docks—with devices being in extreme temperatures or are even dropped—and our people always have the functionality that they need.”

Lee Easley, Director of Information Services at ArcBest Technologies

App developers also required devices that exceeded current requirements so that they could deliver new functionality. “Once we went to Android with Zebra solutions, we were able to streamline delivery and code using a current technology. It’s one of our biggest gains,” Easley says. “We have real-time messaging between employees and supervisors through an app that integrates with our back-end systems. We could not have done that with the old devices.”

Technology for Speed and Reliability

The team explored different companies and devices, and early into its search for a new mobile computing solution, Zebra Technologies caught ArcBest’s attention. In 2016, ArcBest piloted Zebra’s TC75 touch computers, leading to its nearly universal adoption across the company and eventual deployment of Zebra TC75x handhelds, as well as an upgrade to TC77s.

ArcBest also deployed Zebra L10 tablet computers on its docks, enabling workers with a range of functionality, including built-in barcode scanning. Rounding out the solution, ArcBest deployed Zebra Workforce Connect PTT Pro to enhance communications across its operations by turning mobile devices into fully featured walkie-talkies and giving workers robust one-to-one, site-to-site and group push-to-talk services.

For their city operation, drivers use the company’s proprietary City app on Zebra devices to coordinate city pickups and deliveries. The device displays each customer pickup and the most efficient delivery order for shipments using route optimizations. These routes are dynamic and can change throughout the day, so the drivers rely on the handheld to know where to go next. ArcBest also installed intermodal apps to facilitate navigation in rail yards along with apps to assist in finding parking in specific cities.

Beyond navigation, Zebra devices enabled the company to integrate barcode scanning functionality into its mobile platform—a feature previous devices couldn’t support. Drivers can now use the same device to scan barcodes on freight and more efficiently track individual pieces in a shipment. This feature also enables drivers to spend less time on shipping docks, reducing pickup and drop off times, and spend more time on the road.

In addition to providing more robust capabilities, Zebra solutions have also held up to the demanding environment. “We often work in a very harsh environment, and Zebra devices have definitely held their own,” says Easley. “Things happen in the city and on the docks—with devices being in extreme temperatures or are even dropped—and our people always have the functionality that they need.”



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Having a more capable, Android-based platform has also enabled developers to rewrite software to be more user-friendly. Drivers are happier and more productive now that they don't have to worry about the handhelds shutting down, or if theirs won't be functioning that day and will have to be swapped out for different ones.

Dock workers get far more than toughness and reliability. ArcBest's Zebra migration has upgraded the old 7-inch tablets to Zebra's 10.1-inch screens equipped with Gorilla Glass and glove/wet touch technology, enabling employees to view and share information more easily. Regardless of summer and winter temperature swings in the service center, the tablets will reliably direct dock workers to optimize loading and unloading freight from one trailer to another or to the dock.

Workers can also punch in the shipment number or scan the barcode, and the tablet will display information about the shipment. Also, if they see that something is damaged, they can use the tablet to take a picture of it and quickly report the issue.

Within its service centers, ArcBest is also leveraging Zebra Workforce Connect PTT Pro to keep employees connected to one another. The easy-to-use, integrated service is helping employees efficiently communicate, driving high rates of adoption and increased productivity.

The extensive variety of applications for these devices supports ArcBest's goal to deliver customers' shipments faster and more efficiently. With Zebra handheld devices and tablets, ArcBest is achieving its goal as well as creating better end user experiences, deploying next-gen applications and more reliably sharing load, delivery, route, and customer information.

Strong Relationship, Rugged Solutions

To roll out these solutions, ArcBest leveraged Zebra for hardware, deployments, strategy, and support. Though the Zebra devices were relatively simple to implement, working with Zebra provided the company an additional layer of oversight as it continues to enhance operations with new applications.

Rather than purchasing a perceived cheaper consumer-grade technology, ArcBest achieved more value in having an enterprise-class partner with commercial-grade solutions. ArcBest looked past the initial purchase price and calculated that having a more rugged solution provided a significantly lower total cost of ownership for the new platform, while getting better support and access to experts.



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“You can get a cheaper device without support, but you’re going to need to have more devices and spend more time with deployments, as well as more money on repairs,” says Easley. “We want our drivers moving freight, not dealing with damaged devices. And any time you have to swap out a device for another, you’re losing productivity.”

Improving Processes With an Eye on the Future

ArcBest has prepared to meet its future challenges by upgrading its operations with rugged, dynamic solutions that can rapidly deliver new applications. The company is looking ahead, equipped with improved efficiency and increased bills per hour since its migration to Zebra.

As its next innovation, ArcBest has started testing cameras on handhelds to scan shipping documents at customer locations for faster processing, as well as optimizing loads. ArcBest is also looking into deploying RFID technologies to further enhance operations by increasing data and visibility.

“We need trusted advisors that can understand the industry, the direction of our business, and that can respond quickly to our needs so we can continue to innovate,” says Easley. “As a result of working with Zebra, we have a much clearer roadmap on how we can better serve our customers and strengthen our position as a leader in our industry.”

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Lee Easley, Director of Information Services at ArcBest Technologies



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