

tyco

Electronics

elo
TOUCH SYSTEMS

T O U C H S O L U T I O N S

OEMs

- DaimlerChrysler
- Visual Productions, Inc. (VPI)

SOFTWARE PROVIDER

- InterOne Marketing Group

APPLICATIONS

- Vehicle Information Center (VIC)
- Multi-Purpose Kiosk (MPK)

PRODUCT

Elo Entuitive LCD touchmonitor with IntelliTouch surface-wave touch technology

KEY BENEFITS

- Intuitive user interface
- Robust, high-quality system for public use
- Reliable, consistent service
- Fast, accurate response
- Stable, drift-free operation

"I DEAL WITH ELO PERSONALLY AND HAVE BEEN VERY HAPPY WITH THEIR PRODUCTS AND SERVICE, PARTICULARLY THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BE FLEXIBLE . . . WE HAVE USED THEM EXCLUSIVELY."

—Bill Hines,
DaimlerChrysler
Manager of Kiosk
Communications,
Retail Strategies
Division

DaimlerChrysler



For a long time, most DaimlerChrysler dealerships provided customer information by means of a static flip-chart type product information center known as the Prism System. Customers could use this system to aid them in their choice of vehicle by looking up such information as color, wheels, seat restraints, and other specifications. However, because of an overwhelming volume of information, this manual system had to be constantly updated. Keeping this amount of printed information up-to-date was difficult, so the displays were rarely current. To resolve this problem, Bill Hines, manager of kiosk communications for the Retail Strategies division of DaimlerChrysler, initiated the Vehicle Information Center (VIC), an interactive

kiosk for dealers that would supply a myriad of current information. Formally launched in November 2000, the VIC consists of an IBM computer using a Pentium III processor and a 15" Elo Entuitive LCD touchmonitor housed in a sleek kiosk from Visual Productions, Inc. (VPI).

PLYMOUTH HO!

"When DaimlerChrysler decided to revise the Prism System in 1997 so that the information could be displayed and updated electronically, we needed to completely review the user interface," says Hines. "We knew we wanted a kiosk-based system and that we wanted to put the core systems—seating, styling, construction, suspension, handling, power train, air bags, child

restraints, engine, comfort and convenience, and so on—into that kiosk. We also needed the software to drive the units. So we turned to suppliers we knew and could trust.”

These first units—called Plymouth Place—included software designed by Ross Roy Communications (now InterOne Marketing Group) and were housed in kiosks designed and developed by VPI. An IBM computer using a 17" Elo touchmonitor with IntelliTouch surface-wave touch technology drove the Plymouth Place units. Output was to a dot-matrix color printer. Over the next two years, the kiosk units were refined until a prototype of the VIC emerged. However, Hines knew that the initial cost for these units at \$7,500 was far too expensive for dealers, so he commissioned his team to design a more cost-effective, streamlined unit.

INTERONE MARKETING PROVES TWO INTO ONE DOES GO

While Plymouth Place was being developed, DaimlerChrysler was running a program called the Multi-Purpose Kiosk (MPK), also known as the “brand” kiosk.



THE VERSATILE TOUCH-BASED MULTI-PURPOSE KIOSK (MPK) IS PERFECT FOR TRADE SHOWS.

“The MPK was used at Auto Show and other trade show events; it contained the same type of information as the Prism System,” says Ryan McCarthy, project manager at InterOne Marketing Group. “But the MPK was computer-driven and therefore much more interactive and flexible. We looked at the information provided by the MPK and the information required by the proposed VIC, and determined that we could develop software packages that would be scalable between both. We presented this idea to Bill Hines at DaimlerChrysler in November 1999 as a way of achieving his goal and dramatically reducing his costs.”

PUTTING THE MPK TO ANOTHER USE

According to Marcy Patzer, sales director at VPI—which designs and builds all of the kiosks for DaimlerChrysler—the MPK had already proved very popular. “We often call it the brand kiosk,” says Patzer, “because it has interchangeable bezels and side plates that allow it to be branded in a variety of ways. Prior to the development process, VPI met the users of the brand kiosks and took into account their ‘wish lists’ of components to be included in the unit—such as a luggage handle for easy mobility, and a split structure so that it can be disassembled for transportation. We began the development process with these wish lists in mind and created a single unit that could be utilized by everyone, thus keeping the cost low.”

The MPK contains an IBM computer, a Lexmark thermal printer, and a 15" Elo Entuitive touchmonitor with IntelliTouch surface-wave touch technology. Consumers at a trade show or other event can take the information on the MPK printout into their local DaimlerChrysler dealership and save time for both themselves and the salespeople because they are not starting from ground zero. “DaimlerChrysler decided that the MPK was such a great tool, they would

duplicate it in the dealerships,” comments Patzer. “So the VIC evolved to replace the Prism System.” With the green light from Hines, VPI designed the kiosk and InterOne redesigned the software for the MPK unit, made it more user-friendly, and scaled it down to be used in a dealership setting.

THE VIC “TOUCH-OFF”

To keep costs down, the VIC was configured without a printer or streaming video. There was also some talk about replacing the touch interface with a keyboard or trackball. “A trackball obviously would have been much less expensive than providing a touchscreen, but we decided to put it to the test,” says Hines. “We conducted a survey among all our dealers and did a comparison test between the trackball and the touchscreen at the NADA show; a sort of ‘touch-off.’ The touchscreen won hands down.”

According to Keith Hooper, sales engineer for Rathsburg Associates, an Elo representative in Novi, Michigan, “the result was nine to one in favor of touch over trackball as the user interface. It was no surprise that the dealers found it much simpler just to touch the screen. From that time on, touch replaced the trackball as the de facto interface.”

THE VIC TAKES OFF

The votes were in, the new software and kiosk was designed, and the VIC was ready to take off. What’s more, the new VIC unit—including the VPI enclosure, Elo touchmonitor and CPU—was now priced at a much more affordable \$3,500, plus software at \$400 a year.

“WE DECIDED, JUST FROM MEETING ELO AND WORKING WITH THE PRODUCT, THAT THIS WAS SUCH HIGH QUALITY WE WANTED TO BECOME A KIOSK PARTNER . . . NOW WE RECOMMEND ELO EVERY CHANCE WE GET.”

— Marcy Patzer
Visual Productions, Inc. (VPI)
Sales Director

“We have approximately 4,400 dealers in the US,” says Hines. “We have sold the software-only package to 3,704 of them—a total of 84 percent compared to original target of 85 percent. The complete VIC unit has been sold to 1,924 dealers—a total of 44 percent against our original target of 25 percent. So I definitely consider the program a success.”

According to Patzer, most of the DaimlerChrysler dealers now have the VIC software, which can be run from almost any PC. “However,” she comments, “in my experience, most people are reluctant to just walk up to a monitor in a dealer showroom, because it does not belong to them. But when they see the kiosk, they immediately know it’s theirs to gather information from. So more and more dealers are looking at the full VIC unit. They’re impressed by the power of the onboard computer. And they realize there is nothing like a touchscreen for the consumer interface.”

“We became an Elo Kiosk Partner through working together on the DaimlerChrysler program. We decided just from meeting Elo and working with the product, that this was such high quality we

wanted to become a Kiosk Partner, and that feeling was mutual. I think it’s a very good match and we now recommend Elo every chance we get.”

“TOUCH HERE”

DaimlerChrysler’s Bill Hines is firmly convinced that as more and more dealers see the technology, they will adapt. “The touch interface is very intuitive,” says Hines. “It says ‘Touch Here,’ ‘Select the Model,’ ‘Select the Brand.’ It can’t get any simpler than that.” According to Hines, the VIC can be used on the showroom floor in a variety of ways: as a silent salesperson, for information gathering, as a sales tool that adds consumer credibility, and as an education/training tool for the salesperson.

“I deal with Elo personally,” adds Hines, “and have been very happy with their products and service, particularly their willingness to be flexible. They have always been very responsive. We have used them exclusively.”

IntelliTouch Technology



Solid glass and Elo’s patented surface-wave touch technology are the keys to the superior performance of the IntelliTouch product line.

- Pure-glass touchscreens for superior image clarity, resolution, and light transmission.
- Antiglare glass and anti-vandal options.
- Stable, drift-free operation—for touch response that is always accurate.
- Durable, scratch-resistant glass surface—continues to work if scratched.
- Fast touch response.
- Finger, gloved-hand, and soft-stylus activation.
- Smart touch response—no false touch activation.
- Flat, spherical, and cylindrical touchscreen options for design flexibility.

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