



## Società Generale Delle Acque Minerali Lete e Prata, Italy



Sector  
Field Sales

Solution  
Merchandising Services

### Solution Highlights

- palmOne Zire™ handhelds
- Data transmission via mobile phones and palmOne modems
- Handheld data gathering software
- Digital photography of product displays

### IT Architecture

- PalmoSoft PalmoSync software
- IBM FTP server
- SQL database interface
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### Increased competitiveness bubbles forth from handheld field sales solution

*"We rely on business intelligence to give us a competitive advantage. That's why we needed a handheld solution capable of providing ready-to-use, up-to-date data."*

*Gianni Simonelli, CIO of Acqua Lete.*

### Background

Società Generale Delle Acque Minerali produces two of Italy's best known brands of mineral water—Acqua Lete and Acqua Prata.

The beneficial properties of the naturally sparkling Acqua Lete mineral water have been recognised for over a century. In recent years the company has expanded from its local origins to become a major national brand that intends to continue its expansion internationally.

### Challenge

In a country famous for its mineral water, the two brands face stiff competition in the retail space. Sold in a broad range of outlets, from large supermarket chains to small neighbourhood shops, the company's sales depend of effective point-of-sale presence and marketing efforts.

### Opportunity

The company's merchandisers are responsible for ensuring the effective deployment and compliance with the company's various promotional campaigns. They also monitor market

conditions and track the competition's marketing campaigns.

These time-consuming tasks used to be done manually, with reports faxed back to headquarters. They were made all the more difficult by the density and diversity of the company's distribution networks.

As the brands grew the merchandisers and marketing department found themselves overwhelmed by the ever increasing amount of data gathered. Moreover, because the gathering was done manually, it was difficult to produce accurate reports in a timely fashion.

### Solution

Acqua Lete knew that it needed to automate this highly strategic but cumbersome business process.

It started by contacting PalmoSoft, an Italian system integrator specialising in handheld solutions. "We explained our requirements to them [PalmoSoft] at our first meeting, and they rapidly came

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back to us with the kind of solutions we had been hoping for," notes Gianni Simonelli, CIO of Acqua Lete. In effect, the PalmoSft solution combined PalmoSft data capture and transfer software with palmOne handhelds.

The cornerstone of the solution is the palmOne Zire 71 handheld, which was selected because it offered a built-in camera, long-lasting batteries and user-friendly interface. Half of the Zire 71 handhelds were equipped with palmOne modems, while the others were configured to transfer data via the user's mobile phone.

The PalmoSft handheld application enables the merchandisers to capture a wide range of data at the point of sale. Most importantly, the users can also take and transfer photos. This is especially useful when checking the conformity of promotional campaigns or when monitoring the competition.

The data and photos are transferred throughout the day to the Acqua Lete headquarters, where they are automatically integrated into the company's marketing database. "We have a database from which we are able to retrieve statistics and trends regarding pricing, promotions and trading policies," explains Gianni Simonelli.

The entire project was up and running in under two months and

required minimal user training and support, thanks to the easy-to-use software and the palmOne handhelds.

## Advantages

The main advantage for Acqua Lete is increased responsiveness. The marketing department is now able to produce fresh, timely reports. Promotional campaigns can be adjusted on the fly. In particular, they can present a retailer with photographic proof of non-conformity, if the need arises.

This responsiveness has increased the company's competitiveness. "We can now 'see' what's going on in retail outlets, thanks to the real-time nature of the data collection and the added value of the digital photos," explains Gianni Simonelli.

He continues; "The handheld application is so simple and easy to use that our merchandisers no longer make mistakes. This has increased the accuracy of the data."

"We are very satisfied with the solution. Even our merchandisers, who were at first sceptical, have changed their minds. The solution has lightened their work load.

The solution will pay for itself in the first year, and will enable Acqua Lete to save approximately €20,000 per annum.

*Lete*  
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