



# Fercam accelerates thanks to Android



With a turnover of over € 800M and 2,100 direct collaborators, Fercam is one of the main logistics operators in Europe. Founded in 1949, the company is a long-standing customer of KFI, with whom it has been collaborating for over 25 years.

Currently the company has a fleet of over 1800 Android PDAs, centrally managed and monitored via the SOTI platform. These are divided into two main categories: those used by drivers and those used by distribution centre operators.

## Fercam burns stages

As a result of the end of life communication of the Microsoft operating system, Fercam decided to immediately focus on Android devices.

This technological change **“was a rather welcome event, and we did not want to be caught unprepared on this issue”** admits Stefano Albiero, CTO of Fercam.

In 2017, therefore, on the occasion of the renewal of the fleet of devices entrusted to couriers, the company introduced the first thousand Zebra TC75, which, with the new Google OS, made it possible to give an early start to the change of the technological platform, and to optimize the management of software related to proof of delivery activities.

The advantages of the migration were so evident that, on the occasion of subsequent replacement of the distribution centres PDAs, the company had no doubts. We would have continued with the made in MountainView operating system.

In this second case, according to Albiero, **the challenges** that called IT to respond with an innovative and valuable contribution were three:

- 1) Overcoming the technological limits of an outdated operating system (Microsoft), no longer able to meet all the needs of the various businesses.
- 2) Being able to count on a modern operating system (Android) compatible with a new web-based graphic TMS.
- 3) Involve the workforce through a simpler and more familiar user experience.

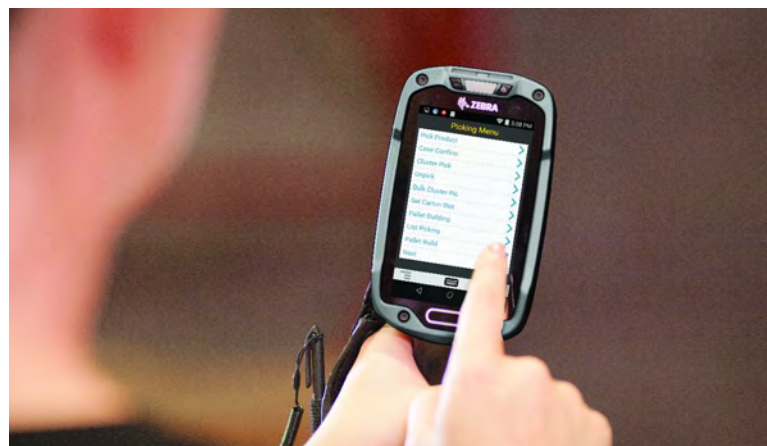
## The solution

### The revolution towards Android

The change of TMS meant an epochal step for Fercam. The company had in fact planned to switch from an application developed in an AS400 environment, with a Telnet protocol based on characters, to a software based on HTML graphic screens accessible via browser/browser accessible HTML graphic screens.

To better manage the introduction of the new application and reduce the impact caused by the change of the operating mode, it was decided to proceed step by step.

In a first phase, KFI took care of the graphic conversion of the pre-existing TMS character screens. In this way, the operators were able to start experimenting with touch mode work, facilitated by familiarity with the original interface. This was possible using Ivanti's Velocity client which - still working in Telnet mode - allows presenting HTML screens to the operator, which can be used without resorting to physical keyboards and button combinations.



The new configuration suggested to KFI the proposal of the Zebra TC8300 PDA, a device with unprecedented ergonomics able to contribute to productivity increase and to bring a better user experience in many processes. Its innovative design may be seen in two of its distinctive features: in the generosity of the screen

and the absence of the keyboard. Therefore, KFI immediately understood that its structure, which allows to view the display optimally during scanning operations, would be perfectly suited to Fercam's needs. In fact, allowing a drastic reduction in wrist movements, this device brings extremely positive effects in terms of ergonomics and speed.



**“ A device of this type, thanks also to the widespread use of Android at the enterprise level, makes it possible to use the same technology in different activities. For example, thanks to the help of SOTI, it is possible to reconfigure the surplus devices with a simple "click", in order to make the most of them in different business areas and processes. In fact, these are systems subject to continuous development for which more and more components that can be installed as needed are available”** highlights Albiero

On the user interface side, with the aim of making the user experience simpler and more immediate, KFI has focused on optimizing buttons and menus. More emphasis has therefore been placed on input fields, characters have been enlarged and button combinations eliminated in favour of digital function keys selectable with a single tap. Finally, the error messages were highlighted using a more noticeable colour.



All without exceeding in sophistication, in order to contain development times and costs, in view of the next step: the replacement of the Telnet derivation screens with the definitive web interfaces of the completely renewed graphics new TMS.

*Stefano Albiero has gained 20 years of experience in Fercam and has held the position of Chief Technology and Security Officer since 2015.*

## The results

The advantages of an optimised process and an intuitive user experience

For Stefano Albiero **“ the migration to Android immediately allowed a clear step forward in terms of use, as evidenced by all the operators who expressed enthusiastic feedback on the usability of the devices: the adoption of the new operating system was therefore easy and downhill”** According to the CTO of Fercam, moreover, thanks to the interaction with the EMM SOTI, **“Android was able to express its full potential by setting the bar higher in terms of quality of use, control, management and configuration, thus lightening the daily impact of Operations processes on IT activities”**

Fercam has therefore embraced with positivity and satisfaction a change that has brought innovation both on the side of new technologies integration, and from the point of view of flexibility when it comes to different business needs.

**“ With Android, in fact, it is possible to find apps for any need and if they do not exist, they can be created with a limited investment”** Albiero finally remarks.

## SOTI®

SOTI is a leader in creating innovative solutions that reduce the cost and complexity of mobile and IoT operations for businesses. In two decades of success, SOTI has been able to build solid partnerships with the main suppliers of mobile platforms and devices which allow it to have a privileged view on new technologies and industry trends.



**KFI** is a system integrator specialised in the implementation of innovative and tailored/customised projects. Since 1991 it has collaborated with the most important technology producers worldwide and supports companies in tracing, innovating and streamlining processes in all Supply Chain phases: production, logistics, distribution and retail.