xively by LogMeIn

SATO

Redefining Support with IoT-Connected Thermal Printers

INDUSTRY: Manufacturing

HEADQUARTERS: Tokyo, Japan

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES: 4,000+ employees

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While the IoT advances opportunity to drive efficiencies in manufacturing and other verticals, we also envision the growing add-on business values this makes available to our customers and partners alike. We share LogMeIn and Xively's vision that being a connected business is about new ways to serve the modern connected customer."

—GARY KRAUSE, *Senior Director of Marketing, SATO America*


CHALLENGE

SATO is a leading global provider of Auto-ID solutions that connect people, goods, thermal labels and information. Founded in 1940 in Tokyo, Japan, the company has a long and impactful history in the industrial printing industry, including inventing the first thermal printer in 1981 and later bringing the first RFID printer to market in 2003.

As SATO grows, it faces many of the common challenges of a global organization. The company employs a mix of direct and outsourced sales and service teams depending on the region, and these teams all have to cover hundreds of models of printers, including customized versions for certain industries or clients. Some of the challenges the service teams faced included limited visibility of how their products are being used and when they have issues, and reliance on human interaction address printer issues. These challenges drove SATO to look for a way to revolutionize its service model. With their strong history in RFID, the company decided to push to create the most connected printer solutions in the industry.

SOLUTION

SATO partnered with Xively by LogMeIn to build the world's first Internet of Things (IoT) label printer. While all printers are theoretically already "connected" to a network, SATO wanted much more than just send print jobs to the printers. Xively's solution gave SATO hundreds of functions to track and monitor in real time on each printer including usage of the printer, errors or when its out of paper or ink, whether certain accessories are enabled and many others.

Xively utilized Heroku and salesforce.com to build both customer facing and SATO-facing apps that give users the power to remotely control and monitor each printer, and then store that data in Salesforce. A SATO service rep could for example, change any of 300 settings on a printer like darkness of the print or language settings. The Salesforce integration also allows for automated triggering of issues before the customer knows about them. For example, customers can set up notifications to let them know when they running low on ribbon or labels.
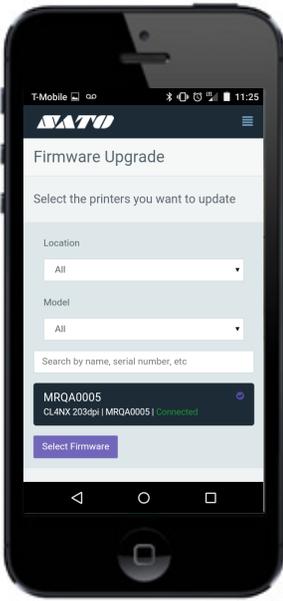
Technicians and administrators can use the SOS App to easily update firmware or settings on the printer.
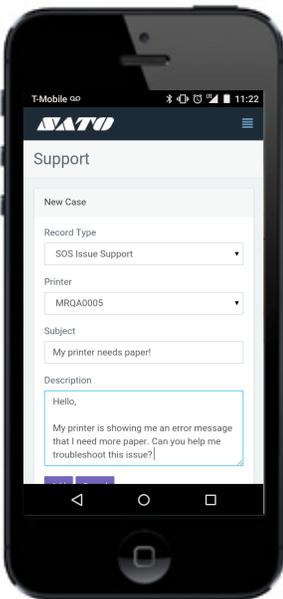
The SOS App allows end users to instantly communicate with support technicians.

RESULTS

With the help of Xively, SATO launched the CL4/6NX-J, the world's first IoT label printer service. The printers are tied into SATO Online Services (SOS), a cloud-based maintenance solution with virtual engineers available around the clock that delivers the following benefits:

- 24 hour/ 365 day a year monitoring of printers to identify problems before they occur.

- Improved operating rates and efficiencies including elimination of unplanned downtime for SATO customers through analysis of logged data.

- Reduced SATO service costs by understanding printer issues before sending in service technicians.

- Overall Xively helped SATO achieve its goal of creating a truly interactive product that allows for always-on customer service with an automated feedback loop that improves service across the board.

- Increased customer satisfaction with user configurable alerts for things like low ribbon or other common errors.

Based on the early success in Japan, SATO plans to roll it out across their service organizations in the United States, Europe and the APAC region.