Datakey
The power of memory. Secured.

The KEY is as Good as Gold

Mars Drinks

Mars Drinks, a division of Mars Great Britain, has been one of Europe's largest providers of soft drink and snack vending machines since 1955. Located in England, they produce in excess of 2.7 million drinks per day. A global player in the drink vending industry, their brands contain a whole range of tea, coffee and hot chocolate beverages.

Applications:
Cashless Vending

Market:
Commercial

Challenge

Mars Drinks' ultimate goal was to increase the marketability and sales of their products so they began an initiative to incorporate cashless vending into their KLIX brand vending machines. This would:

• Provide customers a quick and easy cashless way to buy drinks & snacks

• Increase customer loyalty

• Reduce theft and time spent collecting, counting and re-stocking coins

• Provide a distinctive sales appeal for their machines

• Provide the cash-flow benefits of pre-paid purchases

In order for Mars Drinks' idea to be a success, they needed a serial memory device that would be:

• Rugged enough to withstand the wear and tear of everyday use

• Easy to use to keep sales on the rise

• Fully-engineered to reduce R&D costs and time-to-market

• Available long-term as retrofits could severely damage profit margins

Solution

The Datakey LCK1Kb key was the perfect solution for the Mars Drinks' KLIX project. Mars Drinks even trademarked the term KLIXKEY® to use with these keys. The keys utilize ultra-rugged, solid over-molded construction and contain a non-volatile EEPROM IC that can be written to, read and erased via the Microwire interface on the host hardware.
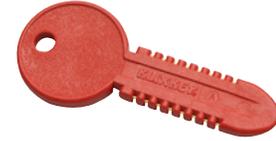
Fully Engineered

The mating KC4210 key receptacle is installed in every KLIX machine to make it easy for customers to upgrade to a cashless system. It provides the physical and electrical connection between the key and the machine. The LOFO switch ensures that the key's contacts have made secure contact with the receptacle before any transactions take place.

Change Comes and Goes

Customers need only one key to operate multiple vending machines. They insert their key into a machine that loads the amount of money deposited onto the key as electronic credit. Purchases are made at the KLIX vending machine by inserting their key into the key receptacle. The purchase amount is subtracted from the credit balance as the vending product is dispensed. An LED display indicates the amount of credit on the key.

Mars Drinks Chose Datakey

Mars Drinks chose a Datakey serial memory solution because of the product's ruggedness and ability to withstand daily use at KLIX vending machines. The familiar form of the keys helps to increase users' comfort level, shortening any user adjustment period. ATEK's 35+ years of experience in serial memory devices and their fully-engineered solutions decreased Mars Drinks' R&D costs and time-to-market. Additionally, the long-term availability of the KLIXKEY product has eliminated the need to do costly redesigns due to electronics obsolescence. By choosing a Datakey solution, Mars Drinks was able to provide the convenience their customers deserve, while gaining the competitive advantage and revenue advantages of a cashless system.

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