

BEDIN Shop Systems' Point-of-Sale and In-Store Software-as-a-Service on the Windows Azure Platform Gains European Retail Market Momentum

aKite® delivers advanced "Connected Retail" solutions on Microsoft's platform up in the cloud

EUROSHOP/DUSSELDORF - 1 March 2011 - BEDIN Shop Systems today announced that the Windows Azure-based aKite® Vers.2.0 software services suite has gained significant customer acceptance as European retailers have increasingly realized the benefits of cloud computing. New customers include mobile phone distribution chains in Italy, as well as Italian retailers Bricocenter, Bruel and luxury brand Jennifer Tattanelli. aKite momentum has been building since the vers. 2 introduction on 11 July 2010 at Microsoft's Worldwide Partner Conference 2010 in Washington, D.C.

BEDIN Shop Systems smart clients are light Internet-centric desktop applications deployed from a Web page and automatically updated from Retail Web Services®, the intelligent "hub in the cloud" designed as a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) for straightforward cooperation inside and outside a retail store chain. POS.net® is the front-store smart client that allows connected and disconnected operations, while back-store SHOP.net® Vers. 2.0 includes stock and suppliers management when this activity is not performed by headquarters but instead by store managers, as in the case of franchises.

"Rapid customer acceptance of BEDIN aKite solutions for retailers provides an excellent example of Microsoft cloud momentum in the retail industry. Through alliances with retail solutions vendors such as BEDIN, we are creating a new and transformative paradigm for IT and business through our Windows Azure platform, enabling retailers to quickly evolve to become 'connected retailers' by providing capabilities that enhance the connection between retailers and their customers, provide the critical connection needed between retailers and their suppliers, while greatly improving internal collaboration from the desktop to the datacenter, and into the cloud," said Simon Witts, corporate vice president, Enterprise & Partner Group, Microsoft Corp.

Another important new feature of BEDIN's cloud-based retail stores services suite is aDI , aKite® Document Interchange, a software service based on the Windows Azure platform AppFabric Service Bus that greatly simplifies integration with legacy ERPs and other on-premises systems such as aKite® DWH, a Microsoft SQL Server for custom business intelligence (BI) updated in near-real-time from all stores. One of the unique features of the AppFabric Service Bus is lack of any system activity or firewall parameterization, without any compromise on security, ensuring simple and fast deployment.

"The Windows Azure platform allows us to deliver a very high SLA and at the same time concentrate our efforts on what we have done best from more than 20 years: design software tools that help retailers to manage and optimize their business. Microsoft brings together the breadth of consumer and enterprise cloud capabilities in conjunction with a familiar technology and productivity platform to provide our retail industry customers with the IT flexibility and choice they need to run their businesses and compete in today's global economy," said Davide Bedin, BEDIN Shop Systems CTO.

BEDIN Customers Embrace Cloud Computing

As distinguished from Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), an advanced Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) such as the Windows Azure platform performs automatically a wide range of complex system tasks including instant scalability, load balancing, fault tolerance, disaster recovery and software upgrades without any service interruption.

A number of European retailers are now realizing the benefits of the advanced cloud-based approach to operations management provided by aKite Vers. 2.0. on Windows Azure.

Mobile phone retail distribution in Italy is mainly based on small regional chains franchised to the leading national and international operators. These smaller chains nevertheless face the same challenges as the larger chains: the need to keep headquarters constantly connected with stores and to maintain very tight control on operations, down to the level of the serial number of each mobile phone.

aKite multitenant architecture takes full advantage from a modern PaaS such as Windows Azure and offers to small chains the high service level agreements (SLAs) and features expected only in much bigger organizations. Several local chains have already switched to aKite, getting higher performance at a lower cost compared to traditional departmental software.

Bricocenter, part of the Adeo Group, is the largest DIY Chain in Italy. Giorgio Breno, the CIO, has been the first adopter of aKite Retail Web Services. The majority of franchisees manage only one - or, at most, a few - stores and their challenge is to reduce stock levels without compromising customer service. BEDIN Shop Systems recently moved to the cloud a warehouse optimization software that maximize the benefits of mutual goods exchanges among franchisees. The Windows Azure AppFabric Service Bus also has been invaluable in connecting legacy systems to the cloud where complex calculations and comparisons can be made to determine the best results.

Bruel, an Italian shoe producer, was faced with the challenge of controlling its product sell-out from several multi-brand independent stores. The solution was an information system with near zero deployment cost and easy to use, but flexible enough to be used also for the entire store management and not only for their corners. aKite and Windows Azure delivered these essential features. As a result, highly secure sales data reaches headquarters in near-real-time through high-speed Internet access on consumer-level ADSL lines.

Casini Firenze is a luxury retailer in the center of Florence run by the owner and creative director Jennifer Tattanelli. In addition to this flagship store, there are show rooms in USA and others are planned in Europe, Middle East and Asia. Its challenge was to implement an international stores system with all the features required to serve high-end customers cost-effectively based on an on-demand and per seat fee. aKite fit the bill and is integrated with Casini Firenze's existing customer relationship management (CRM) through aDI (aKite Document Interchange) based on the Windows Azure AppFabric Service Bus. Based on the cloud and enabling centralized data, aKite allows Casini Firenze management to be in control from anywhere in the world.

About BEDIN Shop Systems

The company has more than 20 years of experience in software development for retail stores and an internationally recognized innovation track record, including the first POS designed on .NET, the first intelligent hub between headquarters and stores based on Service-Oriented-Architecture (SOA) and delivered in SaaS mode, as well the first POS and In-Store Management system designed for Cloud Computing. Web www.akite.net , email giorgio.betti@bedin.it , phone +39 0423 839834 , PR link [http://www.akite.net/en/News/11-02-16/Euroshop - Press Release BEDIN Shop Systems - aKite.aspx](http://www.akite.net/en/News/11-02-16/Euroshop_-_Press_Release_BEDIN_Shop_Systems_-_aKite.aspx)