

The March News

March 6, 1996

OK, I admit it. It's been just a ho-hum kind of year so far. 'Course, if there's been so little going on, why has everybody been so **busy**? I guess there are a few things...

FMI MARKETECHNICS

If you were in New Orleans you saw a great show. All shows are not created equal, and this was one of the best ever. Even good old NCR was allowed to use their traditional name again, which was comforting, but their new (strangely appropriate) black & blue logo will take time (more than they've got) to get used to.

Quite a few **ISS45** RETAIL*partners* made the trip, bringing their top customers to the ICL booth to be impressed, and it worked. The booth itself was impressive enough — 2,500 square feet, easily the largest at the show¹ — but the POS technology was even more so. Everything from automated frequent shopper kiosks, SuperTag (an entire basket of groceries scanned at once), a dynamite expert-system loss-prevention application (this is the software of the future, folks — we wrote six-figure orders on the show floor), you name it.

FMI PYROTECHNICS

Flashbulb city. Yes, the press was there, strobe lights and all. In New York or LA, you'd need Madonna or Crawford or Redford. But celebrity at FMI arrives in the form of the "big guys" from Fleming, and Tom Dooner, George Deiterich and Scott Yeager were all there to sign a landmark partnership agreement with ICL.

Make no mistake, this is a big deal, the biggest in a long time. It will govern how a substantial chunk of the Independent Grocery market gets its PoS in the coming years. And unlike what happened with SuperValu last year, this is a **Three Way Partnership** recognizing and relying upon the irreplaceable value added by the dealer. Many thanks to the legion of Resellers who advised us every step of the way last year to ensure that the agreement would reflect good business and sound procedures for the RETAIL*partners*.

¹ I didn't actually **see** this myself, but I heard that local high school marching bands were practicing formations in there — this just after the finals of the Truck Pull (unlimited fuelers) on the other side of the booth.

AND OF COURSE, FMI N-T ECHNICS

If there was one, there were a dozen. PoS running on NT. Booth after booth, no installations, companies you never heard of, years of work still to go on the feature set, Novell, LAN Manager, software written over 6 layers of 4GLs, 1.2-second scan response time, no customization tools, no interfaces to anything, no data safeguards, no usable redundancy, no communications, no hope of any wholesaler ever supporting it. Just again and again, “We’re different ‘cause we run on NT. Hey, c’mon back here —just **look at this neat cashier screen!!!**”

SPEAKING OF NT...

OK, you want NT, here’s a system running on NT that’s worth something. One of the stars of the show was **ISS45** Version 8. That would be the NT version of **ISS45**, not yet released but ready now for its first installation.² And since the first release will be called 8.3, you guessed it, it has the same features as **ISS45** 7.3. With **ISS45**, the operating system layer is very “well-defined”, which means that the fundamental application code and business logic of the system aren’t affected by the changeover to NT. So you’ll get all the features, none of the bugs. All the interfaces, none of the waiting.

V8’s full GUI back office and the breakneck performance were popular, but it was the configuration that got everyone excited: here’s a full NT system with SQL server, full ODBC, providing complete back office Replication, invisible Resiliency and automatic Recovery without the enormous software and hardware expense required by all those other NT systems previewed at the show. And since it doesn’t rely on the NT or standard MS LAN services for communications or “disk mirroring”, you get rock-solid system stability no one else can provide. Oh yes — and you don’t need to buy 16 MB of RAM for every POS terminal, money those Independents are just lining up to spend, you know...

7450

Yes, we showed this terminal running a preliminary 7.3 version, including full Dynakey support. So if you really love the 7450, you’ll be able to run **ISS45** on it starting with 7.3, due late this Spring.

COLOR TOUCH SCREEN

But we couldn’t let that happen without a new product of our own. Side-by-side, the new **color** touch-screen/keyboard for TeamPoS 5000 (supported on 7.3) blows the competition away. Besides the obvious advantages of color, it’s much brighter, much better contrast, and built unbelievably tough. Even a 25-year veteran cashier (and throw in a few years spent with the Teamsters) couldn’t punch a finger through this thing, let alone budge it from its mounting. Built for ICL in the homeland of the Tiger Tank, it features roughly the same gauge sheet metal.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE 9500?

Let’s see: full dual-plane scanning with even better performance than Series9000, lower prices than anything else, great Reseller margins, seriously impressive to demonstrate. This was the single most appealing new product at FMI, and an instant hit. The Announcement Package will find you soon.

² Call us if you’re interested. We are.

NGA SHOW IN ORLANDO

OK, not every show goes like gangbusters. Like I said, all shows aren't created equal, and this one is, well, just a little less equal than the others. This was the sort of show where all the vendors get to know each other really, *really* well, while we all eat hot dogs (many varieties available) and wait for the occasional retailer to wander down the aisle.

Nonetheless, when things got busy it was very worthwhile. Several small chains spent a lot of time with us, and by the end of the show they were convinced that **ISS45** was the strongest product by a margin. The leads were first rate, and a few **ISS45** systems were actually ordered on the spot.

ISS45 VOTED #1

If grocers vote with their dollars, it's a done deal. Next month, **ISS45** will close its first full year of life, having sold and installed more systems in its first year of release than any other new PoS system product in the last fifteen years.³ You ought to see the ramp-up charts: pretty spectacular.

It's not just the RETAIL*partners* either. **ISS45** enters March flush with some big victories in the major chains. The most recent victims over in that market were SASI, IBM and ACR. Goes to show: if you take away all the reasons to buy anything else, your customers will eventually stop doing it.

AND FROM THE BATTLEFIELD...

So far this year: one ScanMaster system pulled out in favor of **ISS45** in the Southeast. Congratulations: you know who you are. Also, thanks and congratulations to one of the Midwest RETAIL*partners*, who took out the first of several ScanMaster systems in a committed **ISS45** rollout. Other ScanMaster sites are in serious jeopardy in various places around the country — some insider from Washington told us the EPA is considering them for the Endangered Species List.

To your success,

Tony

Tony van Seventer
Director: Supermarket Systems

³ To our best good faith knowledge.