

## Case study

# Elvetino goes full steam ahead with touchscreen POS system



## Swiss railway catering company fits its minibars with robust HP ElitePads

### Industry

Catering

### Objective

Needed modern, robust hardware for Point of Sale (POS) systems in minibars and dining carriages

### Approach

Researched options at the EuroCIS trade fair in Düsseldorf

### IT matters

- Easy to connect the HP ElitePads into the existing IT infrastructure
- Fast implementation of new POS projects due to the comprehensive standard and optional features of the devices
- Wide connectivity spectrum

### Business matters

- Stronger customer focus due to the modern design of the HP ElitePads
- High level of investment protection due to the robust design and use of the Retail Jacket
- More efficient for the stewards due to the convenient, intuitive operation of the POS system via touchscreen
- Addition of a second battery allows the devices to be used for longer without interruption
- Devices can be used throughout the company, including in stationary environments (dining carriages, shops) by adding docking stations



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– Marc Wydler, head of IT, Elvetino AG



Ein Unternehmen der SBB AG.

### Modern minibars with touchscreen tablets

The Swiss railway catering company, Elvetino, has modernised its minibars. This includes installing a modern Point of Sale (POS) system with HP ElitePads. The touchscreen tablets are fitted with protective cases which not only makes them very robust, but also ensures they provide long, uninterrupted performance thanks to the inclusion of an additional battery. The comprehensive technical features of the solution are opening up a range of new applications for the company, such as loyalty programmes.



## Challenge

### A robust mobile POS solution for minibars

Fancy a freshly brewed coffee? Or maybe a hot chocolate? A sandwich or slice of cake to go with it? Elvetino's train stewards and their minibars bring drinks, baked goods and snacks right to passengers' seats on over 540 trains operated by Swiss Federal Railways (Schweizerische Bundesbahnen, SBB). Each year, they serve around three million coffees and espressos. The company also operates the SBB dining carriages, where it offers a varied à la carte menu which changes every three months. Passengers can enjoy the wide range of attractive delicacies provided by Switzerland's leading railway catering company as they travel between Switzerland, France or Italy. Elvetino prides itself on its strong customer focus and its commitment to providing high quality food and drinks.

This is why the company fitted its minibars with an electronic coffee machine some years ago. In the last few months, however, a completely new type of minibar has been introduced, with a number of impressive innovations: a modern design for customer-friendly presentation of products, a new coffee machine that can now also make cappuccinos, lattes and chai lattes with fresh milk, and a new POS system with touch display.

"Innovation is important in the railway catering industry. It's the only way we can set ourselves apart from our competitors at the station. The new SBB minibar will help us to appeal to a wider audience," said Wolfgang Winter, CEO of Elvetino AG, as the company began the installation of new devices.

"It was important to us to introduce an innovative POS system with our new, modern minibar. One that would fulfil our requirements both in terms of looks and technology, now and in the future," says Marc Wydler, head of IT at Elvetino AG. "Mobile POS devices are developing very quickly, and we want to be prepared for any eventuality."

The old POS system, an all-in-one device with a printer, scanner and magnetic card reader, was around 10 years old at the time, and could not fulfil these requirements. According to Wydler, the device was an adapted version of the machines used by the conductors to check and issue tickets. "From an IT point of view, the crux of the matter was that these devices run on the Microsoft® Windows Embedded operating system, and had therefore come to the end of their lifecycle," says Wydler. These old devices had also reached their limitations in terms of data volumes and speed.

So Elvetino began its search for a new mobile solution. It would need to run Microsoft Windows 8® Pro due to the requirements of their POS software, and would need to have a touch display to make it easy for stewards and stewardesses to use. The new POS solution also needed to be as robust as possible to withstand the tough conditions on trains where devices can easily be knocked or fall.



It quickly became clear to those responsible for the project that a practical all-in-one solution was no longer an option. “The technical development for each individual device progresses so fast that the entire system becomes outdated very quickly, and then you have to go through the whole procurement procedure again,” says Wydler.

## Solution

### HP ElitePad with second battery

After some initial research, Wydler and some of his colleagues travelled to the EuroCIS trade fair in Düsseldorf, Germany. Their objective was to take a closer look at various mobile devices. “We didn’t have to look for long, we essentially found our solution at the HP stand on the first morning,” remembers the head of IT. “HP showed us the HP ElitePad 900, and by coincidence it was already running our POS solution perfectly. We were halfway there already. When we then heard that the HP ElitePads feature military standard Gorilla Glass, a wide range of useful accessories, including a case that protects the tablet in the events of falls or knocks, and that a second battery can be integrated into the case so the device lasts much longer, we were completely convinced. We spent the rest of the day looking for the right accessories.” Elvetino COO, Mike La Malfa, who was also on the team that visited the trade fair, was ready to get back on the train to Zurich that lunchtime.

Since then, Elvetino has given 150 stewards the new minibars with the HP ElitePad 900. The remaining minibars will be replaced gradually.

“The employees received complete training on the new minibars and POS system, but no training was really necessary for the tablets as they are so intuitive and easy to use,” says Wydler. “Our employees can now carry out their roles more efficiently and even faster than before.”

## Benefits

### Ready for anything

The improved power supply with the additional battery within the case is a key benefit of Elvetino’s HP ElitePads: “There are no power fluctuations or interruptions with the new POS system, so we no longer have to deal with corrupt files or faulty hard drives when interruptions mean that data cannot be written to the database. It was a frequent problem with old systems,” stresses Wydler. As Elvetino has fitted each of its ElitePads with the Retail Jacket case, and therefore an additional battery, the battery life of the devices is, in the words of Wydler: “more than sufficient.” In testing, the IT department proved the battery life to be around 16 hours.

Elvetino integrated the new mobile solution with Windows 8 Pro easily into its existing infrastructure, along with a new printer. “The biggest advantage for us in terms of the technology is that the standard and optional features of the HP ElitePad put us in a very strong position going forwards. Whatever the technical requirements facing SBB or our business, we can respond,” says Wydler confidently.

## Customer solution at a glance

### Hardware

- HP ElitePad 900
- HP ElitePad 1000 2G

This includes connectivity: The HP ElitePad 900s used by Elvetino have a SIM card for 3G reception. The newer HP ElitePad 1000s, which the company now uses on TGV Lyria trains, also have a 4G connection. "And if SBB decides to introduce on-train Wi-Fi, we can easily connect to it with the HP ElitePads," says Wydler. The HP ElitePad 1000 can also communicate using the near field communication (NFC) wireless transfer standard. "NFC is an interesting alternative that we are monitoring very closely, and that we will be able to introduce if customers want it," says Wydler.

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Both HP ElitePads have a scanner and magnetic card reader integrated into the Retail Jacket. Elvetino has not yet started to use these options. But Wydler already has ideas for possible applications for them. He hopes that stewards will soon be able to log into the POS system with a magnetic card. Additionally the 1D/2D barcode scanner could be used to update the minibar inventory or for loyalty programmes with QR codes.

Elvetino plan to introduce the HP ElitePad into SBB dining carriages using docking stations in the near future. Tests are currently running – successfully – in four dining carriages, as Wydler explains: "The employees love the fact that the POS systems are so much faster, and that the HP ElitePad solution takes up less space. The tablets also give the dining carriage a more modern feel."

According to Wydler, these results also show that the company could even use HP ElitePads in its Segafredo outlets, which can be found in many larger train stations.

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### About Elvetino

Elvetino AG is a leading railway catering company based in Switzerland. It provides catering services on trains across Europe and in stationary outlets in Switzerland. Elvetino operates SBB's 88 dining carriages and 100 minibars. It serves passengers on 20 to 22 TGV Lyria trains between Paris and Switzerland each day, and 11 ETR trains between Italy and Switzerland. It also operates 15 takeaway outlets, mainly in larger stations in Switzerland, and an SBB First Class Lounge. The company is headquartered in Zurich and has around 1,150 employees. Elvetino AG recorded revenues of CHF 81 million in 2013.

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