Telecom Mobile and Onesource

Telecom

M-powering field staff

to provide top notch service

"In a nutshell, it's a staff empowerment strategy. As simple as that," explains Tony Day, National Service Manager, Onesource, who, thanks to Telecom's Mobile JetStream, now has a fleet of fully mobile service technicians operating around Auckland.

Benefits summary

PRODUCTIVITY AND SERVICE GAINS

> Improved customer service through empowered service staff

> Better management control of service levels and productivity

> Reduced errors and inefficiencies

> Improved business cashflow through just-in-time inventory management

"THE TRIALS HAVE SHOWN IMMEDIATE BUSINESS BENEFITS OF A 30% INCREASE IN PRODUCTIVITY AND A 20% IMPROVEMENT IN RESPONSE TIMES."

"This technology supports our wider customer service strategies because it enables our guys to take ownership of the quality of service provided to their customers, which in turn has led to immediate business benefits of a 30 percent increase in productivity and a 20 per cent improvement in response times."

Collectively, Onesource's team of 180 technicians service over 26,000 pieces of office equipment nationwide. Their previous telephone-based job dispatch process involved a dispatcher sending jobs out via pager or mobile phone to the (supposedly nearest) technician – often taking up to three messages to relay all the necessary information. Major maintenance jobs can require up to a dozen parts, and inefficiencies and inaccuracies were common when technicians recorded the 15 character long part numbers on paper and then passed the information over the phone to their dispatcher to be re-entered into a computer back at the office.

Empowered staff – happy customers

Now, supported by Telecom's Mobile JetStream network, Onesource operate a 'quasi franchise' model whereby each service technician is, in effect a 'Territory Manager' who 'owns' the customers within a designated geographical area and is thus intimately familiar with each machine's service history and, most importantly, the customer's requirements.

On the road "all day, everyday" Onesource technicians operate out of station wagons "packed to the gunnels" with parts, an 027 mobile phone, and now, handheld devices with wireless data cards and scanners to record barcoded parts. Each handheld has a second battery sleeve and a strong industrial-strength rubber casing – modified to incorporate a charger outlet for maximum mobility.

As Tony explains, each photocopier's serial number is the key piece of data. When a customer calls in, the job is automatically linked to the area technician. Once it's confirmed that they can accept the job (and Onesource are finding an astonishingly high 'first-try' match rate), they are sent the details via an ECONZ onsite message server. If for some reason a technician is unavailable, a separate reminder text message is sent within 15 minutes to their mobile phones, before the job is passed on to the 'next best' person.

Onesource

U-BIX

Cogent

Feature rich – error free

User fields on the PDAs also contain data entry parameters to reduce errors. For example, the all-important meter reading on the photocopier can't be less than the last reading, or greater than a calculated figure based on that customer's daily average.

Powerful performance reporting

The result? Greatly increased productivity (coupled with significantly decreased travel times), better customer relationships, and empowered staff able to plan and prioritise their workload.

But that's not all. Because Onesource can also extrapolate out all the data stored on each technician's PDA, Tony's team can now produce visually explicit 'at a glance' performance reports for each of them – detailing everything from travel times to the reliability (or not) of particular machines and the all important response times to customers' service requests.

It is this that Tony firmly believes engenders a new 'healthy competitiveness' amongst his service staff, many of whom have worked for the company for over ten years and began requesting this type of technology during focus groups.

"At the end of the day, it's about using technology to drive a competition for quality, which in turn supports our mission of continuous improvement."
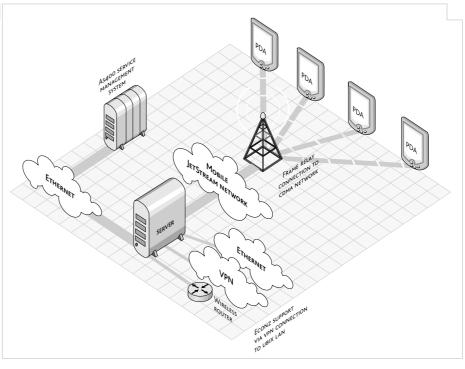
In fact, Onesource are so hooked on the power of wireless data that "in line with our intent to invent the obvious, implement it ourselves and then make the solution available to our customers," Tony says Onesource will also be implementing the solution for its customers, in partnership with ECONZ.

Nationwide rollout

Following Auckland trials Onesource have "mobilised" all of the U-Bix field force deploying 90 handhelds. Planning is well advanced for the rollout of the technology to the Cogent Communications team.

A quantifiable roi

Such an investment in wireless technology doesn't come cheap, but the decision wasn't one that fazed the Onesource executive team when the business case to do so was presented: Tony reports that the planned return on investment of 14 months was actually achieved in under 12 months.

Onesource business basics

> Formed in 2002, Onesource combines the people and operations of U-Bix Document Solutions and Cogent Communications

> Offers products and services to meet virtually all the technology needs of a modern business office

> Annual revenues in excess of $100 million

> More than 500 employees at 13 offices nationwide

> See www.onesource.co.nz

> See www.ubix.co.nz

> See www.cogentcommunications.co.nz

Tech Specs

> IBM AS400 mainframe computer at Head Office

> BPCS accounting platform

> Onsite ECONZ Message Queue Server

> Staff equipped with Telecom 027 mobile phones

> Secure remote access to the U-Bix intranet through Telecom's Remote Office Service

> Service technicians armed with Compaq 3850 iPAQs (with Mobile JetStream-enabled GTRAN type II PCMCIA modem cards) and small handheld scanners

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