

Case Study

Construction Company Reduces Paper and Increases Efficiency with Wireless Solution



Company: Prophit Management heads up three subsidiaries that offer subcontracted drywall services in Calgary, Alberta.

Industry: Real Estate / Construction

Region: Americas

Company Size: Small-Medium Enterprise

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Type of Solution: Field Service, CRM and Dispatch Operations

BlackBerry Partner Solution: Flowfinity Actions by Flowfinity Wireless Inc.

Business Challenge:

A paper-based service management system made executing work orders for service personnel labor-intensive and hard to monitor.

Solution:

Mobilize Sage Timberline Office, a back end service management and billing system, using Flowfinity Actions on the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution™.

Results:

- Service personnel buy-in
- New business opportunities
- Reduced paperwork and phone time
- Streamlined tracking and billing



The Challenge: Streamline Service Management

Making sure their drywall installers arrive at jobs and report back on the work completed was a challenge for Prophit Management. As the management umbrella for three independent drywall companies, they have installers and jobs distributed across the Calgary, Alberta area.

The paper-based service management system they used relied on multiple faxes and phone calls to dispatch and execute every job. If an installer lost a faxed service request while en route, the appointment could be missed. At the end of every day, a service person and supervisor would spend hours collating information about work completed to input into the company's time and billing systems.

What Prophit Management wanted was a simple way of dispatching their installers to job sites – where they could monitor their service response to customers and capture metrics on time worked per job and materials used. A key factor in the solution was its ability to integrate with their existing Sage Timberline Office system, which they liked for its built-in scheduling dashboard and accounting capabilities.

When they discovered the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution, they had their answer. Not only was the system easy to use for less tech-savvy service personnel, it offered the IT team a way to extend the functionality with third party applications. Prophit Management took advantage of this ability to deploy Flowfinity Actions - an out-of-the-box application that allows critical data such as tasks, jobs, tickets, work orders and approval items to be exchanged between users of BlackBerry® devices in the field and business managers back in the office.

User-friendly BlackBerry Lays the Foundation

Prophit Management chose the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution for many reasons. From an end user standpoint, it offered a way to get technology-resistant service personnel to try something that would ultimately help the business.

"Our users are in construction and were against complicating their lives with technology," says David Frank, IS Manager. "But when we showed them how easy a BlackBerry device is to use, they seemed to go on this huge learning curve. Without even showing them, they started using the browser and sending PIN-to-PIN messages."

"I didn't want a BlackBerry device at first," says Eugene Elke, Service Manager for Elktone Interiors, one of the companies Prophit Management oversees. "When I got it, I took it and threw it on the floor of the truck and said 'I will never deal with that thing.' Now I don't know how I got along without it. It's an awesome piece of communication."

By far, the greatest selling point was the ability to easily deploy a new service management process using BlackBerry devices. Because of the architecture behind the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution, Flowfinity Actions can be used on the devices to dispatch service people and automatically collect information from the field. All data sent or received ties into their back end Timberline system and greatly improves the administration and billing of jobs.

"We schedule a job using our Timberline system, but the BlackBerry Enterprise Server™ made it possible to push out that job using Flowfinity Actions so it could be read on the BlackBerry device," says Frank.

"BlackBerry and Flowfinity have showed us that you can take a company this far back in technology and leap frog it forward so it surpasses its competitors."

~DAVID FRANK, IS Manager, Prophit Management Inc.

Partner Profile:



Company: *Flowfinity Wireless Inc.*

- Provides out-of-the-box applications that can be easily custom tailored to the needs of any business
- Flowfinity improves the productivity of mobile workers while also providing managers with timely insight into field operations
- Has a growing base of customers in North America, Europe and Australia

Featured Product: Flowfinity Actions

Application Type: Field Service, CRM and Dispatch Operations

Business Value:

"Flowfinity is so customer-oriented. They helped me enormously during my learning curve because they want to make sure our product and their solution works. They clearly believe that if they don't make us succeed, they don't succeed."

David Frank, *IS Manager*

For more information, visit www.flowfinity.com

Saving Paper and Saving Time

The previous paper-based system involved many steps, faxes and phone calls. Most drywall jobs involve five visits to a location; each installer gets a faxed work order for each job and faxes back status reports at the end of day.

"Some days I would get up to 30 faxes back from all my team in the field," says Elke. "I would have to look at them on-the-fly and then take them home at the end of the day to get the details into some form that could be inputted by our clerical staff into the Timberline system."

With every step tracked and recorded manually, it was easy to lose faxes and miss an appointment. Sometimes faxes couldn't be read, which resulted in numerous phone calls to clarify actions and responsibilities.

"The BlackBerry and Flowfinity solution eliminated a lot of phone time," says Frank. "There were so many points of failure in the old system with unreadable faxes, we could see up to seven phone calls on every job. We worked out that the BlackBerry solution saves about four hours of communication time per job."

The elegance of the dispatch and tracking system is that it has eliminated up to six faxes per job. At the end of each day, no one is still trying to catch up on paperwork since data is entered as the work is completed. Frank estimates the solution has eliminated two hours of administrative effort per day for both the supervisors and installers alike.

"I can now do everything during the day," says Elke. "It has freed up more time in the evenings for my team and me. The service people like it because they input their information on the job. When they shut off their BlackBerry devices at 5 pm, they're done for the day."

"We've virtually eliminated paper, which is one of the biggest expenses for a construction company. Plus we've reduced confusion on the job site because everything is right there on the BlackBerry device, at the job."

~DAVID FRANK, *IS Manager, Prophit Management Inc.*

Better Accountability Helps Grow Business

Prophit is the only construction company in its area that has gone wireless for service management and the results show.

A key part of the solution is the way it routes information to and from Sage Timberline Office. When a service person changes the status of a job, it automatically updates the scheduling dashboard in Timberline that supervisors see on their PCs. Job status is color-coded so supervisors can easily see the status of all the jobs on the day's roster and make decisions that improve customer service.

The system is designed to keep sending service requests to the BlackBerry device until it is accepted at the other end. "We now have more accountability for the jobs we're doing and our customers have noticed and we're getting more work as a result," says Frank. "We're not dropping service calls like we used to because the BlackBerry and Flowfinity solution makes sure a job gets to the installer. The system keeps trying and trying until it gets an acknowledgement."

The system also enables company management to better track a service person's time and materials used on every job. Because this information is automatically routed to the back end system, Frank anticipates it will soon help speed up the billing cycle and make it more accurate.

"Once that piece is in place, we anticipate that our service personnel can complete a work order and just click 'invoice,'" says Frank. "That will be another way we streamline our business."

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Results:

Service personnel buy-in: The easy to use BlackBerry devices won over the workforce and made it possible for a new wireless service management approach to succeed.

Reduced paper and phone time: Up to six faxes, seven phone calls and hours of night time administrative effort per job were eliminated because data is now wirelessly sent and collected using the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution and Flowfinity Actions.

New business opportunities: Customers are noticing that Prophit Management companies can be depended on to be on time and on the job when they say they will be. As a result, new business has been offered to the company.

Streamlined tracking and billing: Because all data is routed into the back end scheduling and accounting system, more data is collected that will one day help speed up the billing cycle.

For more information on solutions for BlackBerry, visit www.blackberry.com/go/success