

Powys Council leads the way in delivering mobile technology to operatives for lower costs and improved efficiency

News

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Welsh Unitary Authority Powys Council is taking the lead in rolling out mobile solutions.

Many local authority organisations are already discovering the benefits of replacing paper with electronic devices for managing repairs to housing stock. Powys is quickly moving beyond this single valuable application to implement a mobile solution in areas as diverse as civic building repairs and inspections, legionella testing and clinical waste management.

At the same time Powys is providing web portal-based access to the information in its databases to the managers of all its buildings, from schools to leisure centres. For the first time managers have complete view of the services and maintenance delivered to their specific building.

Not only will the solution help mobile staff carry out their work more effectively and reduce the time and mileage involved in each working day, but it also enables managers to make faster and better informed decisions.

How it works

The operative's working day is now driven by electronic forms loaded onto PDAs that are used by operatives for every aspect of their job. Whatever task is being carried out - building inspections, housing repairs, boiler maintenance - operatives will use their PDAs to receive job details, work through the procedures that have to be undertaken, and provide instant feedback to the back office. That feedback could include time and costings, parts used, tests carried out, even van checks at the beginning of the day. Where the feedback highlights an issue - such as a failed risk assessment - the system will deliver automatic alerts to the manager that action needs to be taken.

The portal technology provides a window on all this information for managers. Leisure centre managers, for example, can for the first time see in one place a history of maintenance, services provided and even the results of the latest legionella tests. Access is controlled to make only relevant information available to each user. Because users are accessing information through a web-based browser, there are no application licences to be bought and no skills that need to be learned.

Choice of 1st Touch technology

The solution is driven by forms technology provided by mobile technology company 1st Touch, integrated with back-office job costing software from ROCC.

The overriding advantage that 1st Touch offered was flexibility, providing room for evolution and growth, says Jones. "Business changes fast and we wanted to

be able to change forms and develop new solutions for a growing number of users for ourselves." At the same time, 1st Touch's partnership with ROCC was important. "As far as I was concerned, this was two companies providing a single solution," says Jones.

John Stabler, MD of 1st Touch, comments: "We are delighted that our experience in working with local authorities and in integrating our technology with back-office systems has proven valuable in this visionary project. We look forward to supporting Powys as it rolls out its mobile applications into new departments right across the Authority, which completely mirrors our enterprise wide mobile development strategy."

For John Jones, these applications of mobile technology are just the beginning. "We have achieved a lot, but we don't intend to stop. We bought this product to move on, not to stand still."

About 1st Touch

1st Touch, based in Southampton, Hants, has enabled dozens of field workforce-based organisations to painlessly embrace new mobile technologies and so achieve significant savings, greater productivity and more cost-effective use of resources.

Enterprise mobile technology enables organisations to completely transform existing paper-based working models into dynamic, flexible and efficient mobile working solutions...

1st Touch Mobile delivers three clear and unique benefits:

Reduced costs to organisations because airtime is minimised and the system is always available – with or without airtime;

Flexibility through simple customer control over forms creation and amendment;

Integration to multiple back office and other enterprise software applications, so that data is entered only once.

The property services market is a key focus for 1st Touch, where best of breed mobile solutions can deliver fast tangible benefits to the business.