

ON THE MOVE

With Continental Airlines

“We just loved the whole idea of NetMotion Mobility and the simplicity of implementation...it was logically the best choice.”

Neriah Roberts, Continental Airlines Network Engineer

Continental Airlines is the world's sixth largest airline. With more than 41,000 employees and 3,100 daily departures, Continental serves 56 million passengers per year.

In 2002, Continental tried to improve its baggage handling process by providing wireless access to its airline reservation system. They wanted ramp agents and baggage handlers to have immediate access to arrival and departure data so that baggage handling remained efficient, even in the face of last minute changes.

“Our goal was to ensure that passengers' bags are routed correctly and arrive promptly at the appropriate baggage claim area by giving baggage handlers and ramp agents access to data in real-time over a secure, wireless network, using handheld devices.”

However, they faced several challenges. Baggage handlers are mobile and constantly moving between wireless LAN access points. To further complicate matters, employees access the reservation system via a Terminal Services application that is very connection sensitive to subnet roaming and coverage gaps. Connections were constantly being dropped.

“Every time a worker moved out of range of one of the airline's access points, the data session dropped out and the employee had to restart the application and log back in again. The re-authentication process took about six minutes per instance, and workers had to repeat this procedure several times a day.”

Understandably, ramp agents quickly became frustrated. Some spent hours speaking with IT support, while others stopped us-

ing the devices all together.

Continental had invested two years and hundreds of thousands of dollars in their wireless strategy. They needed a solution that would not only overcome the connectivity challenges at hand, but fit seamlessly into their existing investment.

The airline chose the Mobility XE mobile VPN from NetMotion Wireless.

Mobility XE insulates application sessions from loss of connectivity. Even as Continental employees roam among access points and subnets, Terminal Services sessions remain active and, when the device reconnects to an access point, the application automatically resumes sending and receiving from the point of last transmission.

“The solution is user-friendly, so we were able to re-deploy the handheld devices with minimal training. This had a positive impact on user acceptance and overcame any skepticism that was a result of the previous deployment.”

Continental also needed to secure their highly confidential data from unauthorized access. Because Mobility XE provides a Mobile VPN designed specifically for wireless environments, it was a perfect fit. Now, no matter where employees need to be, they are automatically authenticated, encrypted, and connected securely to the reservation system.

The baggage handling process has definitely improved and productivity increased since the deployment of NetMotion Mobility. In fact, the airline is now planning to extend its mobile computing solution to its cargo department. Cargo plans to use Mobility for reliable wireless access to maintenance-related applications.



MEET THE MOVERS



Continental Airlines is the world's sixth-largest airline. Continental, together with Continental Express and Continental Connection, has more than 3,000 daily departures throughout the Americas, Europe and Asia, serving 151 domestic and 133 international destinations - more than any other carrier in the world. With over 41,000 employees, Continental has hubs serving New York, Houston, Cleveland and Guam, and together with Continental Express, carries approximately 56 million passengers per year. Continental consistently earns awards and critical acclaim for both its operation and its corporate culture. For more company information, visit www.continental.com.