

Case Study: Hertz

Rental-car company speeds customer service with portable point-of-sale (POS) connections. At more than 1600 "off-airport" locations in urban centers and neighborhoods, Hertz Local Edition leases cars with an emphasis on service and convenience. Needing reliable, secure connections for a "line-busting" initiative to speed customers on their way, Hertz opted for the Mobility XE mobile VPN as a key piece of its infrastructure. Mobility XE makes hundreds of devices spread across the company's diverse locations easier to manage, while also enforcing payment card industry (PCI)-compliant security for protecting payment-card transactions.

About the Deployment

At its Hertz Local Edition offices, the company supplements fixed terminals at the rental counters with portable POS devices. When customers are waiting, a staff member can grab a portable terminal from a docking station, provide service anywhere and save the customer from having to stand in line. By carrying the portable POS devices out to the rental lot, staffers can escort customers to their vehicle and provide curbside service, or meet customers who are returning vehicles. Carrying the point-of-sale to the customer speeds transactions, often completing the entire visit without the customer having to set foot in the rental office.

The Panasonic Toughbook U1 Tablet PCs run Windows XP, with a variety of network connections: wired connections through the dock, Wi-Fi access points where installed, or AT&T cellular data service. Mobility XE allows the units to make the transition from wired to wireless connections seamlessly, without interrupting the data connections or any Hertz customer-service applications that might be active. In addition, the Toughbooks are fitted with magnetic readers for processing credit cards. The mobile VPN encrypts the card data so the transaction remains secure. As Bruce Sanderson, project manager, declares, "This project is successful in supporting our mission due to the combination of Panasonic's Toughbooks, AT&T's quality service, and Mobility XE."

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Roll-Outs Made Fast and Flexible

Hertz relies solely on AT&T for all cellular service which makes the entire installation faster to put in place and easier to centrally manage. Connecting via the readily available cellular service is easier than installing and maintaining local Wi-Fi access points just to handle a few devices at each location. It also makes it possible to set up a small rental or return center quickly, in a strategic location, without excessive start-up costs. And through Mobility XE, Hertz manages all devices at all of its locations nationwide through a single data center.



Organization

Hertz

Industry

Transportation Services

Objectives

- Implement reliable connectivity for mobile POS terminals
- Secure customer data and PCI transactions
- Deliver LAN-type experience throughout frequent location changes

Solution

- Mobility XE Mobile VPN
- Panasonic Toughbook U1 Tablet PCs
- AT&T wireless data service
- AT&T CCS (Commercial Connectivity Solution) with custom APN (Access Point Name)

Results

- Better customer service with shorter time-to-vehicle and time-to-return
- Flexible, rapid provisioning to quickly start up new locations
- Lower operating costs

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Corporate and PCI-Compliant Security

Hertz is extremely security-conscious because of the nature of the customer data they handle, and the Mobility XE Policy Management module is a big piece of the security effort. Policies detect and block prohibited traffic within the portable computing device, before it can traverse any external networks. Various access policies are enforced based on the type of connection: more permissive policies while the device is in the dock and wired to the Hertz internal network, more restrictive over internal Wi-Fi, most restrictive on the cellular network. Over the latter, connections are allowed only for the essential customer-service applications, and only to authorized Access Point Names (APNs).

In addition, Hertz works in a retail environment which means they process credit and debit cards. They also handle private information associated with the car-rental business such as driver's licenses and insurance data. The tight security of the Mobility XE mobile VPN encrypts the data stream with the highest level of security available, in keeping with PCI standards as well as Hertz' obligation to protect its customers.

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For Customers, Many Happy Returns

With its "line-busting" initiative, Hertz is leading the way among service-focused organizations. In today's competitive environment, the most successful companies are those that delight customers with the most responsive-possible service. Such exceptional customer service is key to winning loyalty. In fact, says Sanderson, "As this project unfolds we are applying this concept to gain efficiencies in several other areas of our business."

The mobile deployment enabled by Mobility XE takes service directly to the customer, rather than the customer waiting for attention. When a customer returns a car and is greeted by a representative who can accept the return, complete the transaction within seconds and send the customer on his or her way, Hertz is not just getting the car back, but also assuring the customer will return as well.

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