

## Field Service Mobility Best Practices

Mobile field initiatives deliver tangible benefits in increased productivity and improved customer service. A mobile virtual private network (VPN) such as Mobility XE™ from NetMotion Wireless is the key to achieving best practices in a deployment and realizing the full benefit of the investment. It provides secure, reliable network connections for mobile workers; builds worker acceptance to overcome common change-management issues; and allows greater span-of-control for field managers and IT staff.

### The Drivers Behind Mobile Initiatives

Delivering applications and data to mobile workers is a key initiative among organizations with field operations. In a recent survey, 83% of companies reported that implementing fully connected mobility (real-time access) was either extremely or very important to them. Among the reasons cited were worker productivity (60%), faster service resolution (41%), cost control and reduction (32%), better resource visibility (24%) and revenue opportunities (21%) (Aberdeen Group, June 2009).

Results have been impressive. Service and manufacturing companies that rolled out mobile deployments reported a 23% increase in workforce productivity, 11% increase in first-visit service-call completion, and savings in fuel, overtime and other costs amounting to more than \$470,000 per company (*Mobile Field Service Axis*, Aberdeen Group, 2009 Q1).

#### Unilever Counts on Mobility XE for Field Sales Productivity

With a product portfolio that includes some of the world's best-known brands, Unilever operates in more than 100 countries worldwide. Its 1500-member sales team carries Windows mobile devices to access real-time information and submit sales orders for immediate processing. After evaluating a wide range of alternatives, they selected Mobility XE for its reliability, policy-management capabilities, support for RSA SecurID two-factor authentication, and track record of successful large-scale implementations.

*"NetMotion Mobility XE is the only product which met all our requirements...including secure and persistent application connectivity for a variety of PDA devices."*

- Richard Oxenham, Mobile Solutions Specialist

#### Cox Communications Saves \$500,000 Annually in Management Costs

The third-largest cable and broadband provider in the U.S., Cox serves approximately six million residential and commercial customers across 22 states. Every year, its 3,500 field technicians handle more than six million work orders accessed through an online system, with reliable connectivity ensured by Mobility XE. In addition to productivity increases estimated at 10 percent in some instances, the ability to deploy and update software remotely delivers IT savings estimated at a half million dollars a year.

*"NetMotion Wireless software helps us overcome everyday wireless coverage gaps and interruptions. Their solution is helping to make our field service operation more efficient, ultimately helping us to deliver better service to our customers."*

- Al Briggs, Director Mobile Solution Services

**Enhanced Customer Service** Improvements in worker productivity have corresponding benefits for customer service levels. Solving problems on initial service calls is both a cost savings for the company and a convenience for the customer. Giving field personnel more timely access to CRM, support and other customer data allows them to handle a wider range of service issues face-to-face, deepen the customer relationship and earn loyalty. Sales orders can be submitted in real time for immediate processing and faster fulfillment. Service information such as parts availability or repair tips can be checked at the customer's site for faster problem resolution. Updating service tickets in the field also allows call center-based service reps to give real-time status reports. This improves the customer experience and lays the groundwork for Web-based, customer self-service initiatives.

### **Jacksonville Electric Authority Improves Customer Service with Mobility XE**

One of the largest municipal utilities in the United States, JEA delivers electricity, water and sewer services across 841 square miles in northeast Florida. No single wireless communications network covers the entire region, and whenever field workers were forced to switch to a new network, it took 20-30 minutes to log back into the system. Implementing Mobility XE delivers continuous, reliable, secure access that works with all of the applications the users need. These include dispatch, CRM tools, e-mail, and GIS and electrical service delivery applications for locating underground and electrical equipment.

*"Mobility XE simply worked like it said it did... and is helping JEA deliver the best customer service possible."*  
- Kent Mathis, Research Project Consultant

## **The Role of a Mobile VPN**

Implementing a mobile-computing system can be a challenge because it typically involves significant organizational change and new work habits. Selecting the right VPN – an often-overlooked yet vital piece of the infrastructure – is essential to facilitating a successful rollout.

Mobility XE is a mobile VPN widely used in field service. Like a conventional VPN, it secures enterprise data across public networks through encryption, and protects corporate networks by ensuring that only trusted users and devices gain access.

However, it does much more: It is the key to delivering the full promise of the entire mobile deployment. Mobility XE is expressly designed for the unique characteristics of mobile environments, where workers roam and use computing devices constantly, while expecting uninterrupted use of open applications throughout the workday. Mobility XE is the essential "glue" that ties together multiple networks including various cellular data services and Wi-Fi, aggregates disparate mobile devices, and manages them as a single virtual network and deployment.

With Mobility XE, organizations can:

- Increase the number of jobs completed per day, and boost first-service-call completion
- Enable real-time scheduling, billing, service-level agreement verification, and order entry
- Reduce the number of help desk calls from field workers
- Improve the customer experience by ensuring that field representatives have the most current data, especially when they are in customer-facing situations
- Maximize the return on investment in mobile devices, applications and wireless connectivity

Any application that runs over a wired network works in a wireless environment with Mobility XE. It facilitates mobile field-force initiatives such as:

- Workforce management,
- Scheduling/dispatch,
- Customer relationship management (CRM),
- Maintenance/warranty repair,
- Asset tracking/reverse logistics, and
- Fleet/route management.

## Deployment Best Practices

Common challenges that organizations face in field deployments are described below, as well as the role that Mobility XE plays in achieving best practices.

### Secure, Seamless User Experience

The most common reason for failed mobile deployments is lack of user acceptance. If field tools are cumbersome or difficult to use, workers will not embrace them.

As many organizations have discovered, connectivity problems are the most common source of frustrations. Workers often lose connections and need to re-log in; and when applications are running during those interruptions they often crash, requiring workers to not only log in again, but re-enter the data they lost.

Mobility XE makes the wireless experience secure and transparent. It handles logins automatically as field workers transition between various cellular networks and access points, and keeps the applications and connections alive as they traverse those boundaries and encounter coverage gaps.

Workers only need to log in once at the beginning of their shift. This single sign-on also supports two-factor and multi-factor

### Continental Airlines Workers Embrace Mobile Applications

Continental Airlines gives ramp agents and baggage handlers wireless access to its airline reservation system. This keeps efficiency high even in the face of last-minute schedule changes. At first the system was plagued with dropped connections, causing high levels of worker frustration and resistance since they had to restart and reauthenticate with each interruption. After deploying Mobility XE, the connection problems disappeared. Now wherever employees roam, they are automatically authenticated and securely connected to the reservation system.

*"The solution is user friendly... We just loved the whole idea of NetMotion Mobility and the simplicity of implementation."*

*- Neriah Roberts, Network Engineer*

### Food Distributor Increases Customer Visits, Achieves Higher Sales

With revenue riding on more-efficient order entry and fulfillment among its 5,000 salespeople, a major food service company was ripe for a mobile solution.

To give continuous access to CRM and order-management systems, the company adopted Mobility XE. For maximum efficiency, policy management gives priority to critical applications during business hours, while allowing management software to run at night for laptop updates. The deployment adds one more productive hour per employee per day – an effective productivity gain of 600 full-time employees annually. This allowed for more customer visits, and greater customer service.

*"There's no user intervention required, they just turn on their laptops and it works... The benefit to the business is feet on the street. Giving the sales managers back an hour a week... lets them visit additional accounts."*

*- Director of Operations*

authentication (via smart cards, RSA SecurID tokens, or device certificates) for a seamless, secure user experience. Workers freely use their devices without having to manage connections. Plus they can suspend or hibernate applications throughout the shift without having to reauthenticate or risk data loss. Data connections remain secure without hindering users.

In mobile deployments that begin with conventional VPNs and are subsequently replaced with Mobility XE, this simplified user experience leads to significant productivity gains. In new deployments, it delivers a positive user experience that facilitates change-management and speeds adoption of field tools.

## Management Control

Managing mobile devices across a dispersed workforce is a challenge, and more so in large deployments. Securing and maintaining hundreds or thousands of field-based devices, miles from the corporate data center, is much easier with Mobility XE.

**Control over device use.** Giving the IT team and field managers control over remote devices allows them to:

- Set and enforce policies to manage user and device access to networks
- Improve security and protect users from inadvertently taking action that bogs down devices or connections
- Set rules to limit access to specific applications, prohibit web browsing, or restrict access to intranets or specific sites
- Enforce restrictions based on connection speed or time-of-day
- Prioritize users by line-of-business applications, so critical traffic has the highest priority

## Grange Insurance Speeds In-Field Claims Processing

Serving policyholders in 13 states, Grange prides itself on speedy claims processing. Adjusters carry laptops to customer sites, access claims and estimating applications, and upload digital photographs to document damage. With Mobility XE they process claims even faster. Now they routinely complete one claim, start transmitting the data, and then place the running laptop on the car seat while driving to the next appointment. Grange also uses QoS management features so claims applications have priority access over other applications for swift processing.

*“Our mobile claims associates need a stable and reliable environment with constant access to their applications. With NetMotion we are able to ensure our consistent performance — in and out of coverage areas.”*

*- Butch Knowlton, Manager of Claims Projects & Business Analysis*

## Trican Secures Connections, Slashes Invoice Cycle Time

Trican Well Service has over 1,500 field workers in Canada, the U.S., Russia and Kazakhstan. They use a wide variety of access networks including cellular, wireless LAN, satellite and dial-up. Workers stream data from oil-well sites to field offices, and access electronic ticketing software for billing, asset tracking and scheduling. Mobility XE secures and stabilizes their communications channel through intermittent coverage gaps. Trican also uses management tools to restrict web browsing and e-mail use on mobile devices as they do on their wired network.

*“Mobility XE has been integral to the wireless solution that has reduced invoice cycle time from 45+ days to less than one week.”*

*- Sheri Roth, IT Manager*

This policy-management capability is especially useful for keeping file synchronizations and other large data transfers off of cellular networks, where they might interfere with customer-related business applications. Workers carrying laptops, handhelds or smartphones can all have different policies, or supervisors may have policies separate from the workers they manage.

#### **Visibility into usage patterns and problems.**

Monitoring performance across multiple networks is a challenge, especially when networks are outside of IT's direct control. Mobility XE Analytics measure and report on device, application and network usage. Administrators can spot coverage or connection problems, determine high bandwidth consumers, drill down to monitor traffic patterns, verify version details, monitor battery life and much more. In addition, proactive notifications based on adjustable thresholds can dramatically decrease help desk calls. Staff are alerted to potential device or network problems so they can be resolved before they disrupt workers or impact service quality.

In environments where safety is a top-line concern, such as for utility crews or other potentially dangerous work environments, a mobile VPN can provide an added level of safety. An active device indicates that all is likely well at the work site, and the mobile device also provides a reliable communications link.

**Enforce device security.** Mobility XE Network Access Control software verifies that devices have required security precautions in place – such as patches, operating system updates, and active antivirus with current signatures – before allowing a connection. Depending on the severity of the issue, administrators may choose from a variety of actions, ranging from simply warning the user, to requiring immediate remediation, to quarantining the device. This gives administrators the flexibility they need to protect the corporate network without hampering worker productivity. They can also automatically remediate the device, at a time and in a way that doesn't interfere with its productive use.

**Patch management and upgrades.** Mobility XE allows field-based devices to be managed “over the air”, through third-party systems management software, as easily as the organization manages desktops and laptops on the wired corporate network. Application updates and patches may be pushed out while the unit is still in the field, but when users aren't actively logged on, between shifts. This eliminates the need to dock a unit or wait for a wired connection and can provide significant labor and cost savings for IT staff.

#### **Beckman Coulter Boosts First-Call Service Resolutions**

A \$3 billion global manufacturer of biomedical test instruments, Beckman Coulter has over 200,000 installed systems in laboratories, hospitals and other critical care settings around the world. The company deployed Mobility XE to give its field service engineers access to information needed for installation, maintenance and repair. Field engineers can now easily share image files with technical support and specialist teams, and diagnose equipment issues on-the-fly.

*“We've been able to reduce or in some cases eliminate the need for additional service calls to a customer's location. This saves time and money and increases the productivity of our engineers.”*  
- Jeff Silveira, Project Lead, Mobile Field Applications

## Conclusion

Mobile initiatives have great promise for field organizations. Deploying a VPN built for mobility such as Mobility XE is essential to realizing the full benefits of the investment and achieving best practices. These include delivering secure, reliable network connections, promoting user acceptance, and gaining management visibility and control. In this way, organizations can ensure that they achieve greater productivity and deliver exceptional customer service.

## For More Information

For field service case studies and more information about Mobility XE, please visit [www.netmotionwireless.com](http://www.netmotionwireless.com).

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