

DHL delivers efficiency and savings for mobile computers

Leading global supply chain company DHL used to have about 5 to 10% of its handheld mobile computers out of action at any time, but not any more...

With around 250 Motorola handheld mobile computers supporting warehousing services for more than 80 major clients, DHL Supply Chain New Zealand needs to ensure uptime and optimise the efficient operation of each and every unit. But in a highly competitive market, keeping costs down is a serious issue.

DHL has implemented strategic Enterprise Support Services from Mobico, combining consulting, training and Motorola's Mobility Services Platform (MSP) to help them maximise productivity and reduce costs.

"Before we started to use MSP," says Jeremy Lightbourne, IT Manager for DHL NZ Supply Chain, "we would have anywhere between 5% to 10% of our units out of service for any number of reasons. But now, because we have so much more control over our mobile assets with MSP, we have significantly reduced the number of out-of-service units to 1% or 2% most of the time. This means we have reduced the number of spares we have to maintain, we can keep our field staff more productive and we can shift under-utilised units to more productive projects quickly and easily."

Simplified front-line support

DHL provides third-party logistics services to some of New Zealand's largest organisations. They receive shipments, store inventory in their warehouses and then pack and ship deliveries as required. For each separate client – called agencies – DHL must configure their Motorola MC9090 Handheld Computers specifically for that agency. Before DHL adopted MSP, this had to be done manually at a central location. Now because of MSP, warehouse and field staff can

re-configure their handhelds themselves by simply scanning a sheet of barcodes. This makes it easy to reallocate the handhelds to specific agencies for stock-takes, large shipments or special orders. "With MSP I can track every single unit in our fleet of handhelds," said Lightbourne. "I can see where they are, how they are configured, even the charge in the battery. I can prepare comprehensive reports and respond quickly to any challenges. This is a fast moving business and we have to be able to respond to the needs of our customers quickly and without any drama. MSP gives us this ability."

Downtime costly

Before DHL engaged with Mobico, setting up their handhelds was a time consuming process. "Each unit had to be individually configured for a specific location by trained technicians at our central facility in East Tamaki before we could use it," explains Lightbourne. "It might have taken a week or 2 before it would go into production. If we wanted to re-configure the unit for a different location, we would have to physically ship it back to base for the changes. If the units needed any upgrades to firmware or needed repairs, we would need to do it manually, again at our East Tamaki facility. Plus there was no easy way to track our assets. These are not inexpensive machines and any downtime made it harder to maintain schedules." DHL engaged with Mobico to help support their fleet of handhelds in 2007. "Our productivity and uptime was vastly improved once Mobico started to assist with repairs and maintenance," says Lightbourne. "But we still didn't have the complete control over our mobile units that we wanted. For instance, for our PCs we use the



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IT Manager for
DHL NZ Supply Chain

Symantec Altiris remote management solution to track and monitor our 300+ PCs. Ideally we wanted to be able to manage our mobile units in a similar manner." Mobico's Managing Director, Aldas Palubinskas said "because DHL values total cost of ownership (TCO) best practices, Jeremy and his team were quick to understand the benefits of using an Enterprise Mobility tool to support their fleet of mobile computers. We worked closely with DHL to help them document the business case for MSP and then implement it. This was assisted by our other MSP customers endorsing the solution and benefits."

More control, faster response

With MSP, DHL now has much more control over their assets. Lightbourne said that one of the benefits of MSP is that they can provision new units and re-provision existing units in as little as five minutes when in the past it might have taken weeks. Mobico has prepared a set of bar-codes on laminated sheets that contain all of the necessary instructions to configure the units.

"All we need to do to provision a new unit is to turn on the machine, scan in the bar codes and reboot.

It is that easy. And if, for instance, we need to use all available units for a major stock take, we can re-provision all the units at a facility for that agency quickly and easily. At the end of the project we can re-provision them back so MSP gives us unprecedented flexibility to maximise the efficiency of our handheld assets. Plus we can shadow users to guide them through applications or processes." Lightbourne adds that trouble shooting is also facilitated by MSP. "We work our hand-held units pretty hard. Sometimes they malfunction in the field and need some attention from our support staff. With MSP we can remotely log into the machine, look at all the configurations and make any necessary adjustments. This allows us to take care of any minor issues without taking the unit out of action. And if the unit has to go back to base for repair, the field staff can re-provision another unit to complete the job by scanning in the bar codes. Again, with MSP, our field staff can do the job in the field in minutes; before the unit had to be returned to base and required a specialist. All of this adds up to a more flexible and responsive service for our customers."

CASE STUDY
> DHL New Zealand's Supply Chain

AT A GLANCE
Industry

> Supply chain distribution
Business Objective
> Centralised control of 250+ mobile handhelds
> Facilitate the 'provisioning' and 're-provisioning' of mobile computers

> Streamline the process, reduce downtime, maximise productivity
Solution
> Mobico consulting and technical services

> Motorola Mobility Services Platform (MSP)

Business Benefits
> Reduced 'out-of-service' units by up to 90% (from around 15 to around 2)

> Empowered front-line staff to provision and re-provision units in minutes as opposed to days

> Gave management real-time monitoring & management capabilities and enhanced reporting

> Reinforced DHL's reputation as market leader in service and technology

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