



Edward Don & Company

Edward Don & Company, a leading distributor of food-service equipment and supplies, separates itself from the competition through state-of-the-art technology. The company enhanced its processes within each business unit by implementing centralized, enterprise-wide computing infrastructure, sales force automation, a national call center, data warehousing, and an e-commerce Web site. When sales teams complained that sending customer orders over a dial-up line was stealing large chunks of time out of their days, Edward Don realized it needed mobile broadband access with real-time ordering capabilities.

Objective.

Restaurants, schools, hotels, country clubs, and other food service businesses depend on Edward Don's 12,000-plus products, such as paper products, furnishings, cleaning supplies, and equipment, to keep their food services running smoothly.

Each day Edward Don's 350 sales representatives order the much-needed supplies to restock their customers' diminishing inventories. The sales teams had developed a consistent pattern of closing their workday by sending customer orders over their dial-up connections. The incoming orders, which invariably arrived in bunches, were causing network traffic jams.

"The ordering process was slow and cumbersome," says Jim Lyman, vice president of e-Commerce Customer Connections at Edward Don. "Sales representatives were complaining that it was taking too much time, and they had to dial into the network multiple times."

Lyman quickly realized that the company needed a more efficient process for handling sales orders because the sales representatives' main priority is meeting with customers, not wasting time waiting for a dial-up connection.

Solution.

Edward Don eliminated the sales team's dial-up hassles with Verizon Wireless Mobile Broadband. Because the sales teams are located throughout the United States, Edward Don needed national broadband coverage to access the Internet and the company network. The extensive coverage that Verizon Wireless offers more than met the company's requirements.

EDWARD DON & COMPANY

WWW.DON.COM

Company Description:

Owned and operated by the Don family since 1921, Edward Don & Company is a leading distributor of food-service equipment and supplies. Independent restaurants, national chains, health care, hospitality, country clubs, schools and universities, government institutions, and food-service management depend on Edward Don as their chosen supplier because of its knowledgeable sales representatives, unmatched product selection, nationwide distribution centers, and integration of new technology.

The company provides each salesperson a Dell® Latitude® D620 notebook with Mobile Broadband Built-In, that allows them to access the Verizon Wireless broadband network. These powerful notebooks have embedded wireless cards that allow Internet browsing, email, and intranet access. With Verizon Wireless Mobile Broadband Built-In, the sales representatives can use their notebooks to update orders, check inventory supplies, and send email in real time throughout the work day.

Lyman selected embedded wireless notebooks because they are so durable—and a huge time saver. Each salesperson visits 8 to 12 customers daily, taking the notebook in and out of the notebook bag. External cards, he says, are more easily broken in this environment.

“Having embedded cards is a big advantage for us. They keep the equipment expenses down because we aren’t always ordering replacements. We rarely have support calls about the embedded cards.” As for installation, the embedded devices are factory-installed in the Dell notebooks, making Mobile Broadband Built-In hassle-free.

Results.

“Once the sales representatives could process orders anytime throughout the day, we saw a marked improvement in productivity immediately,” says Lyman. “The reps gained 45 to 90 minutes per day. It was an unbelievable up-tick in productivity.”

Giving the sales representatives more time in their days means big benefits for Edward Don. Now the sales representatives are making two to three more sales calls per day, which is increasing sales and customer satisfaction.

“The sales force has faster, better access to everything, from anywhere,” says Lyman. “They are communicating much more effectively with customers and with the office.”

Customers know if their orders are in stock because the salespeople can check inventory in real time. “The sales representatives can take orders and transmit them at the customers’ sites. They immediately know if the inventory is in stock, which closes the deal on the spot and blocks out competition,” says Lyman.

In terms of cost, Edward Don compared dial-up connectivity and Verizon Wireless Mobile Broadband and determined that moving to Mobile Broadband was cost-neutral.

Lyman and his team looked at two hard costs: charges for 800 numbers used for dial-up access and the costs of notebook maintenance and security. In the past, the IT team mailed software updates to the sales team on CDs. They estimated that only 40 percent of the reps uploaded the updates. Since moving to Mobile Broadband, the IT team can push out the updates to the notebooks automatically. The automatic updates accomplish two top priorities: securing the network and cutting out the cost of mailing and burning the 300-plus CDs.

The cost savings materialized quickly. The 800-number charges dropped by 90 percent and the costs for mailing and purchasing the CDs were eliminated completely.

Objectives:

- Improve productivity by providing national sales team with ability to enter sales orders in real time.
- Create an environment where new orders arrive throughout the day, rather than at the end of the day.
- Decrease dial-up and maintenance costs.
- Enable access to corporate applications, including email and order and inventory systems to improve mobile workforce productivity and efficiency.
- Deploy a reliable, mobile solution that allows improved communication between the sales force and its customers.

Solution:

- The Verizon Wireless EV-DO-based CDMA network allows the sales team to place sales orders and view inventory in real time while at customer sites.
- The 350-person sales team relies on Dell notebooks with Mobile Broadband Built-In.



Supporting the fleet of notebooks is also easier for IT. The tech support team uses remote access tools to troubleshoot notebook issues. In the past, the sales representative would mail the notebook to IT for a hot swap at a round-trip cost of \$150. The company was averaging two to three hot swaps per week. Now that the team can address the damaged notebook remotely, the hot swaps are down to one per week.

“Having wireless broadband access is a significant time and cost saver for tech support, and it has also changed the sales representatives’ lives by eliminating downtime,” says Lyman. “We don’t want sales representatives to be technicians. Now they can go in for a cup of coffee and have their notebook fixed while they wait.”

These types of leading-edge technology impress new hires and customer prospects, says Lyman. “New employees see us as a technology leader, which makes us more competitive in hiring the best talent. We also highlight our technology with prospective customers. When we visit them, we showcase the innovations we have deployed and they are always impressed that we are at the forefront of technology in every way.”

Results:

- Sales representatives gained 45 minutes to 90 minutes per day, increasing productivity.
- Sales representatives spend more time with customers, increasing sales.
- Wireless broadband access improved customer response time, improving customer service.
- The durable, pre-installed embedded wireless cards keep IT costs down and need minimal support.
- Dial-up costs reduced 90 percent.
- Sales representatives know what inventory is available.
- Sales close more quickly, blocking out competition.
- Costs did not increase by moving to EV-DO.
- IT reduced costs of sending notebooks back for repair from two or three per week to one per week and reduced costs of mailing 250 to 300 CDs with software updates to sales representatives.
- Sales team have a better work-life balance.

Speeds require an EV-DO Rev. A-capable device. When using an EV-DO device that is not Rev. A-capable, you can expect download speeds of 400 to 700 Kbps and upload speeds of 60 to 80 Kbps. Mobile Broadband speed claims based on our network tests with 5 MB FTP data files, without compression. Mobile Broadband is available to more than 240 million people in 248 major metropolitan areas and 232 primary airports in the United States.

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