



Heavy Equipment Distributor

A distributor of heavy construction equipment headquartered in Moline, Illinois, provides both new and used equipment and parts. Companies in the mining, construction, forestry, and utility industries depend on this company to keep their mission-critical equipment up and running.

Objective.

The distributor sought a mobile data solution that would allow its field technicians and sales representatives to receive essential equipment data at a customer's site. Most of the company's employees work out in the field, including technicians that spend their time repairing and maintaining the equipment at a customer's site. The company wanted to get information to those technicians more quickly and eliminate wasted time spent driving back to a customer service agency for service and customer information.

The company also wanted to help sales personnel close sales more quickly by giving them a more efficient way to communicate with customers and gather information for a price quote. By enabling real-time access to corporate data, the distributor could give its sales team and field technicians the information they needed to decrease equipment downtime, increase productivity, improve customer satisfaction, and reduce operational costs.

Solution.

In Florida, the company participated in a mobile solution trial that relies on Evolution Data Optimized (EV-DO) technology and the Verizon Wireless Mobile Broadband network. More than 60 of the company's employees use wireless EV-DO cards in their notebooks to gain high-speed broadband access to applications that improve productivity.

The solution's Service Advisor is the most important application for the field technicians. While inspecting customer equipment, they can download software updates that include oil pressure, hydraulic pressure, engine performance, and other necessary information. They can also connect to the corporate applications for service bulletins—so they know if a particular piece of machinery has a known problem—specifications on different vehicles and, in the future, real-time updates of manuals.

According to a company representative, data transfer in the EV-DO test area has been very reliable. "We can burst to 2 Mbps on EV-DO, and we don't have to wait as long for file transfers as we did with GPRS [General Packet Radio Service]," he says. Most file downloads are from 30 KB to 2 MB in size.

The salespeople depend on the mobile solution to access a customer relationship management (CRM) package, which allows them to log all sales calls and conduct a remote synchronization over the EV-DO network.

HEAVY EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTOR

Objectives:

- Give equipment technicians and sales team access to information, such as price quotes and technical specifications, while in the field.
- Increase employee productivity by reducing time spent driving to and from an office.
- Improve customer satisfaction by decreasing equipment downtime.

Solution:

- Notebook computers equipped with EV-DO cards running over the Verizon Wireless Mobile Broadband network give about 60 employees high-speed access to applications such as email and information about equipment specifications and technical bulletins.
- Access to a CRM package gives sales personnel the ability to log all sales calls and conduct remote synchronization of data over the network.

Results.

The primary benefit that the company has seen since the implementation of the EV-DO mobile deployment has been a boost in employee productivity at many different levels, says the representative. "We've greatly reduced the driving time back and forth to the office. We've cut about 10 hours per week, per technician." In the Florida region, where the EV-DO trial is taking place, the distributor has about 30 technicians, making for a sizable time savings of around 300 hours per week. The technicians have increased their productivity with the time saved.

Customer response time has also improved. "We are able to respond more quickly from the time a customer initiates a call to getting the technician on site," he says. "We are able to save several hours of equipment downtime—it could be up to two to four hours per customer."

Employees are also able to collaborate with each other via email in order to troubleshoot problems while in the field. This collaboration further reduces equipment downtime.

The distributor is also saving on transportation expenses because its employees are driving less. "In general, we can pay for the [EV-DO] card in one service call," he says. "Employees are not forced to come back to the office, so these cards make them more efficient."

"From the dispatchers' and technicians' points of view and the sales point of view, they can get information in real time, so our environment is much more seamless," says the company representative. "If I have a technician within an area, the service department will know his general location and we can generate a customer request service call to the tech via email and tell him, 'You are within a 20-mile radius of the customer,' and give him the information to complete the job."

With so much success and having experienced excellent network performance, the heavy equipment distributor plans to continue giving mobile access to more and more employees to further boost overall productivity.

Results:

- Access to customer information and maintenance requests from the field has boosted employee productivity, allowing technicians to increase their workload.
- Response time has improved, saving two to four hours of equipment downtime per customer.
- Driving time has decreased, lowering fuel costs and saving approximately 300 hours of nonproductive driving time each week.
- Employees are able to collaborate via email to troubleshoot problems in the field.
- Sales personnel are able to close sales more quickly.

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**COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE
HEAVY EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTOR**