

THE BUSINESS SERVICES GROUP.COM LTD

The same-day delivery market is crowded and competitive. To gain an edge here requires an innovative solution that provides significant administrative savings. Klicka Courier set out to achieve this through the integration of internet, mobile working and telephony technologies.

OBJECTIVES

Using the latest mobile technologies, Klicka Courier offers a web-based booking and quotation service linked automatically to a network of contracted drivers. These drivers have mobile computers that enable them to accept jobs, be guided to the pick-up and delivery points and notify the customer of a successful delivery within ten seconds of obtaining a signature.

The objective was to develop a system that allowed prospective customers to place an order for a delivery and receive an instant quote, be kept up-to-date with the progress of their job and receive instant confirmation of delivery. Klicka also needed to maximise the matching of consignments with available couriers in order to minimise vehicle movements, and to help couriers achieve efficient pickups and drops.

For the company's administrative purposes, the system had to be able to handle large volumes of orders with minimal involvement of office staff, while keeping the customer informed about the progress of the job. And to create a competitive edge Klicka needed a system that did all this without human intervention – only requiring personal intervention if things went wrong, rather than with every job.

SOLUTION

Klicka's system comprises of two functional components. The first is a back office courier job control system, with broadband connections to the internet, which collates jobs booked by customers through the Klicka website. The second component consists of handheld PocketPCs that are also mobile phones and cameras. These are loaded with job control software and integrated with satellite navigation software to provide vehicle location information that is delivered over the GPRS network at a low cost.

Unlike many courier companies, Klicka licenses owner-drivers of vehicles, who receive full price for a delivery. Drivers are also free to turn jobs down, and to work for other courier companies. Each licensed driver is equipped with a PocketPC and can use this to signal their availability to Klicka's system.

A discount scheme encourages customers to book jobs online. When they do so, the pick-up location details are passed to the

Best practice in:
mobile

Sector:
Distribution

Size of firm: 12 employees +
100 licensed drivers

Location:
Peterborough

Website:
www.klicka.com



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ANDREW OSBORNE – FINANCE DIRECTOR,

back office system, which uses the Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) location data from the drivers' handhelds to identify the nearest free vehicle. The driver is sent details of the job and is free to accept or decline it. The information about the item and customer details are then sent to the driver's PocketPC via the GPRS mobile phone network and the driver can be guided to the pickup point to collect the package.

Satellite navigation and tracking lets the driver and the system check progress. If the driver is running behind the estimated delivery time the system alerts a controller, who can manage the problem and keep the customer informed of progress. In this way, office staff only have to manage exceptions, rather than each and every job, and this dramatically cuts operational overheads.

“The system allows the company to monitor in real time the progress of a vehicle delivering a customer's consignment,” explains Andrew Osborne, Finance Director at The Business Services Group.com Ltd. for which Klicka Courier is a trading name. “This allows the controllers to ‘control by exception’ and become proactive in dealing with potential problems.” Traditionally, problems only became apparent when the driver or customer called in over the non-delivery of the consignment.

On delivery, the recipient's signature is captured electronically and immediately e-mailed to the original customer over the mobile network.

“The traditional courier company requires a large number of controllers and administrative staff to control the business processes. Our controllers only get involved when things are not going to plan. This has created a virtually paperless process for the ordering and delivery of a consignment,” says Andrew.


Other administrative savings are achieved because the ordering, delivery and billing systems are virtually paperless. In addition, drivers are self-billing, which cuts out yet more paperwork.

RESULTS

The high degree of integration in the system means Klicka Courier has low overheads and so can compete on price with other, larger courier services. As a result of its use of technology, Klicka has become Royal Mail's supplier of choice for same-day courier services.

So far it has rolled out a number of agents across the country and signed up more than 100 drivers nationally. “Our objectives were to reach a wide audience, deliver an online booking system for customers, and provide information to customers,





agents and drivers,” says Andrew. As well as managing to do this, the website also has a real-time map for tracking fleet members currently logged on and provides forums for news and information on company developments.

CHALLENGES

The idea of a totally wireless system was clear enough but Andrew says there were “a couple of false starts” in trying to find both the hardware and software capable of providing the business solution. “Until the advent of the PocketPC with integrated mobile phone technology, the cost and ability to deliver the control of the process, end to end, was proving difficult,” he says. Even when those arrived, implementing the complete system called for close work with the suppliers of software and hardware.

The website could do more to illustrate the power of Klicka’s business model – “it needs to be more visual to gain immediate impact,” says Andrew. The company is currently addressing this by updating the website.

Top tips:

- A fully integrated site can lower costs substantially, allowing the smaller company to compete with larger rivals.
- Take more time in the planning process and develop a full specification of the system requirements.
- Technology companies over-promise and under deliver and often do not have adequate business analysis to deliver the solution requested. So, choose your technology partners carefully and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

THE LAST WORD

The online quotations and booking service, allied with the automatic allocation of jobs to drivers, and e-mailing of recipients’ signatures back to customers, has dramatically cut the company overheads compared to a traditional courier firm.

“In an industry that is predominantly controlled manually through mobile phones and landlines, Klicka Courier is successfully delivering a fully integrated and controlled process for delivery of a same-day consignment,” says Andrew.

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