



ICEE Serves Up Better Service Through Mobile Data Solution

BY COUNTERMIND L.L.C.

Enterprise Background

The ICEE Company makes cold carbonated beverages such as Arctic Blast, ICEE, Slush, and Smoothies, as well as snack foods that are sold throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada in convenience and grocery stores, theaters, malls, amusement parks, and other consumer outlets. The company, a subsidiary of Pennsauken, New Jersey-based J&J Snack Foods, operates branch offices throughout the continent. Each year it sells more than 300 million ICEE drinks. ICEE also manufactures the food service equipment used in making its drinks and employs a field service operation of about 400 technicians who provide on-site maintenance and support for the ICEE machines.

Business Driver

Several years ago, the company created an internal call center application for handling service-related activities such as routing customer service requests and dispatching technicians. In the field, however, the

ICEE service technicians relied on paper forms and cell phones to coordinate all of their tasks. The company wanted to find a way to automate field activities to help service technicians be more productive, speed up billing cycles and provide better customer service with faster responses to service requests.

Solution

The answer to ICEE's workforce automation needs was to extend its enterprise system into the field with a rapid, cost-effective development cycle. The approach of Countermind, a mobile software vendor for medium to large mobile workforces, was to decouple the business process from the technical plumbing. When combined with the rich application programming interface support in Windows Mobile software, the solution was assigned to help project developers easily go through multiple iterations of the mobile application without extensive recoding on each version.

Working with Countermind and Tolt Technologies, a company that

specializes in providing wireless network and mobile data collection devices — ICEE deployed a Microsoft Windows Mobile-based field service automation (FSA) solution that uses ruggedized Symbol Pocket PC devices equipped with wireless modems and a tailored field service application with deployment to 400 service technicians.

"We are very familiar with the Windows-based environment, and the decision to go with the Windows Mobile platform was an easy one," says Brandon Lackey, manager of technical services. "The innovative approach Countermind took provided a natural extension for our enterprise application - and a natural extension for our existing expertise. What we've learned in this process we will apply to other areas of our business."

To create and integrate the mobile application and the call center applications, ICEE used Countermind's Mobile Intelligence Platform, a framework that includes a server, messaging services, and various smart clients for mobile devices.

The Return

- Enterprise system is extended to the field
- Improved technician productivity
- Increased responsiveness to customer calls
- Faster billing cycles
- Ease of use by dispatchers

With the Mobile Intelligence Platform, companies such as ICEE can develop or modify mobile applications targeted for specific departmental jobs such as field service work.

The FSA solution created with the Mobile Intelligence Platform

allows ICEE field technicians to communicate with the company's call center application over WWAN, WLAN and LAN connections. Additionally, the devices support 802.11b and

Mobile communications are tightly integrated with the call center.

General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) technology. Countermind's framework uses XML-based message services for communications between the MI Smart Client and the MI Server. Technicians can order parts, scan bar codes, close out job tickets, view new service orders, capture customer signatures and perform other tasks whether or not they are in an area with wireless coverage.

Mobile communications are tightly integrated with the call

center, allowing a dispatcher to take a call, drag and drop it into a technician's queue, and as soon as the device synchs, the technician is able to pick up the message and take the job. Dispatchers can also reassign priorities for the technicians, so they can be rerouted to more urgent calls.

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Randy Starr, Countermind's director of technology, says the ICEE project validates their decision to approach mobility with a flexible, service oriented architecture (SOA).

"We've got a tremendous amount of flexibility in our product offering, which enables us to deliver a solution that fits our customer's technical, business, and cultural needs." Starr

says. "ICEE has experience with Microsoft development environments, so they'll be able to easily evolve their mobile applications and the Mobile Intelligence Platform Java Edition will support other organizations equally well." □

Countermind L.L.C. can be reached at 303.794.1660 or www.countermind.com.

For more about Tolt Technologies, call 888.381.8549 or visit www.tolt.com.

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