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Small Deployment Honorable Mention: Sealing Up ROI



By Adam Brickman

“The main issue driving the SealTrac deployment was the [2002] FDA Bioterrorism Act,” reports Chris Kingham, director of marketing for Anyware Mobile Solutions. Imposing additional shipment tracking and reporting requirements, the Act spurred Midwestern corn syrup distributor Base to re-evaluate an inefficient and mistake-prone paper shipment tracking system. It approached Anyware with its problem, and the SealTrac custom application was the result.

With Anyware's development, Base switched to an electronic tracking system with partial deployment in fall 2004. With the old system, handwritten invoices were sent back to the office and manually input into spreadsheets, paving the way for transfer error; with the new process, bar-coded seals are scanned, and the information is wirelessly sent to the Base office server and automatically cataloged.

Using PsionTeklogix 7537 handheld computers and communicating over Base's existing Wi-Fi system, SealTrac maximizes worker efficiency and decreases the likelihood of rejected shipments. Despite some initial skepticism from end users in the field, the new technology was quickly accepted. The paper system was entirely dropped in favor of the electronic one in March 2005.

Anyware also immediately recognized the market-wide potential for a shipment tracking application. SealTrac can run on any Windows-based device, and it can be configured to send information directly to the Anyware data center, so no in-house IT is required. “SealTrac was designed to be easily customizable for different environments, depending on specific customer requirements,” says Kingham.

By using the company's existing Wi-Fi network and home office infrastructure, Base also minimized deployment costs to the extent that the investment will easily pay for itself by year's end. With each returned shipment representing a \$25,000 loss for Base, the prevention of 1.5 rejections completely covers the cost of deployment. •

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