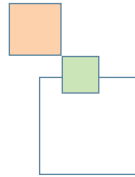


Spirit delivered the goods for AJG

Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) are being increasingly used throughout all stages of the supply chain. At the same time, they are becoming more powerful and versatile than ever. A typical example is the Mobile Compia M3+, a state-of-the-art PDA distributed in the UK by Spirit Data Capture Limited. One company that is enjoying the benefits of this versatile device is AJG Parcels.



AJG Parcels is a third party carrier based in Inverness. It specialises in meeting the logistical needs of some of the UK's leading blue chip parcel companies. AJG services the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, which cover an area the size of Wales. Formed in 1992, it now has ten depots, 160 employees, and some 80 delivery vans.

Until recently, one labour-intensive area of AJG's activities involved the sheer volume of paperwork that had to be processed each day. In particular, some 3,500 proofs of delivery had to be inputted manually into its clients' various systems. AJG therefore started looking for a more streamlined and cost-effective approach. ▶



Case Study

Adrian Gray, Managing Director of AJG Parcels, explains: "We wanted to find a way of automating proof of delivery and collection, and of tracking the precise location of our customers' parcels. We therefore started looking for a hand held device that our drivers could use to collect the end customer's signature at the point of delivery."

Whilst conducting an Internet search, Adrian came across Spirit Data Capture Limited, an independent company specialising in mobile computing and automated data collection. He continues: "We particularly liked the Mobile Compia M3+, a PDA that is distributed by Spirit. It was new to the market, and promised to be a highly cost-effective solution. We therefore ordered over 100 devices so that they could be used by our drivers."

The Mobile Compia M3+ met all of AJG's criteria for reliability, accuracy and image capture. It is a light and compact unit that boasts options such as a laser barcode scanner; an 802.11 b/g radio; GSM/GPRS; a Bluetooth radio; and an integral 1.3 megapixel camera.

Adrian says: "We asked Spirit to help us to develop an application that would enable our drivers to capture the end customer's signature electronically and send it straight through to the client's system in real time, using the Mobile Compia's GPRS capability. This system would also enable end customers to track the location of their parcel through our website."

The drivers can use the M3+ as a mobile phone, with a Bluetooth headset. The devices are also used for satellite navigation, as the vans have cradles that incorporate GPS (Global Positioning Satellite).

"The Mobile Compia devices have boosted the efficiency of both our delivery and administrative processes," says Adrian. "They are much faster and more accurate than our previous manual system, and provide us with much greater traceability of the parcels."

"Spirit Data Capture have been very helpful and easy to deal with throughout the development of the new system. They have become like an extended IT Department for us, advising us on a wide range of hardware and software issues and the most appropriate solutions for our needs."



"Now that we have completed the first phase of the project – the proof of delivery and collection system – we have asked Spirit to help us to explore further benefits of the Mobile Compia's GPRS capabilities. They will therefore be setting up a messaging system between our depots and the drivers, and a collection management system."

He concludes: "We are very happy with Spirit's solution, as it enables us to provide an even faster and more efficient response to our customers' logistical requirements."