Stockholm's traffic administration cuts time and costs using IFS eService Order™ for PDA

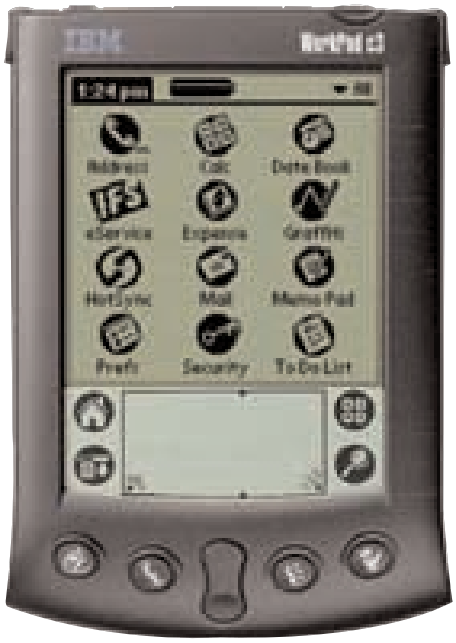
With IFS eService Order for PDA providing mobile access to the ERP system, service technicians working for the City of Stockholm Traffic Administration in Sweden can save 30 minutes each per day. Stockholm Traffic Administration, a subdivision of the Stockholm City Real Estate Administration, is responsible for the traffic infrastructure in the Stockholm area. When the Traffic Administration invested in a common ERP system for its various units, integration with mobile devices was a key requirement. The preferred choice, IFS Applications for Service Management™, has now been in use since early 1999 and is being rolled out to the handheld computers used by the Administration's field technicians.

The problem

In Stockholm, the capital of Sweden and its largest city, the efficiency of the Traffic Administration is decisive for the smooth flow of traffic since its service technicians are responsible for the traffic infrastructure. This includes 24x7x365 maintenance of road signs and the entire network of traffic lights. However, the old service management system was becoming increasingly unwieldy. Gunnar Lundberg, Technical Manager of the Real Estate and Traffic Administration of the City of Stockholm, explains: "Previously, service technicians jotted down their jobs on paper in the morning and received additional jobs over the telephone during the day. This meant that they had a lot of information to enter into the computer at the end of their working day." By giving the service technicians IT support in the field, they would be able to do a better job in a shorter time, with less administration as a bonus. The problem was to find a handheld tool with sufficiently flexible software to support it.

The solution

The Traffic administration found the answer to its problem by equipping its service technicians with a pocket-sized IBM Work Pad that linked them with the ERP system via a combination of IFS and IBM technology platforms. IFS eService Order, a remote extension to IFS Applications for Service Management, and IBM's Mobile Connect combine to provide an integrated mobile tool that allows access to the company's database. "At IBM, our philosophy is to integrate our mobile solutions with a customer's existing systems. This is easily done with our Mobile Connect platform, which connects directly to IFS' platform, IFS eConnect, and allows seamless integration with their ERP system," explains Thure Bergström, sales manager for Mobile Solutions at IBM, Sweden. The handheld computer with IFS eService Order can be used online, via the mobile telephone network or, as in the case of the Traffic Administration, off-line during the working day but synchronized with the ERP system when docked.



Benefits

Rather than developing an application to fit each individual company, time and costs were saved by using the standard solution that IFS had developed for handheld devices, IFS eService Order. Based on IFS' component-based solution for service management, the application gives mobile access to a version of the service order's information and logic, adapted to fit a small screen. When technicians pick up their Work Pad each morning, they receive exactly the information they need, so there is no time lost looking for their jobs or sifting through unnecessary information. "The handheld solution saves at least 30 minutes a day in administration time for our service technicians since they can access service orders and other information in the field," comments Gunnar Lundberg, who adds, "The IBM Work Pads with IFS eService Order for PDA also allow them to register information on site, which might otherwise be forgotten. This includes data such as time reports, expenses and spare parts, allowing the information to be automatically synchronized with the ERP system upon return." The next morning, the technicians go to the docking station and collect the Work Pad, which contains a list of the day's work orders, including a selection of information from the system database such as service history, frequent faults of a particular piece of equipment and an indication of what spare parts might be required.

One of the major practical benefits of the solution is that reporting is now done by the individual service technicians, in contrast to the centralized reporting of the past. As a result, the rate of errors has been reduced considerably since duplicate data entry is no longer required. It is also easy to learn how to use the Work Pad, so time is saved on training as well.

Stefan Multing, global sales manager for IFS Service Management solutions, mentions a further benefit: "Some alternatives to using our standard solution include developing tailored solutions for specific circumstances or carrying a laptop PC in the field. Laptops are more expensive and much more unmanageable because of their size. Moreover, there is always a risk that valuable equipment is stolen, which we have seen happening to PCs left in vans. The combination of IFS and IBM technology enables service technicians to carry their office with them at all times in the shape of the Work Pad."

By investing in the service management solution provided by IFS, including IFS eService Order and IBM Work Pads, Stockholm Traffic Administration has a mobile solution that adds speed and agility to its operations.

Software

IFS eService Order for PDA, IFS Applications for Service Management, IBM Mobile Connect

Hardware

IBM Work Pad, 3Com PalmPilot
IBM Netfinity

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