

3 June 2013

Software and handhelds from Spirit save time and money for J D

Williams

When the online home shopping company, JD Williams, required software and handheld devices to enhance the audits conducted by its Direct Despatch Expeditors, it chose a solution sourced and developed by Spirit Data Capture Limited. Spirit provided a system that combined the strengths of Motorola MC55 mobile computers with SOTI's MobiControl software. The new solution has produced a range of benefits that have ensured that the audits can be carried out quickly, reliably and accurately.

J D Williams & Company Limited is the leading direct home shopping company in the UK. It has over 40 successful catalogue brands and offers a vast array of clothing and other products. Formed in 1875 by James David Williams, it became the first company to use the UK's parcel post service to send products directly to its customers. The company, which is part of N Brown Group plc, now has over 3.5 million customers and 3,300 employees.

JD Williams has warehousing facilities at two converted mills at Shaw, near Oldham and a further facility at Hadfield, Glossop. The company uses Direct Despatch Expeditors to visit over 300 suppliers and to complete audits through parcel scanning and the real-time transmission of captured data. To maximise the effectiveness of these operations, JD Williams needed some mobile data capture devices and specialist software.

The company had previously used batch handheld units that didn't require network connectivity. However, it decided to upgrade these units to more feature-rich devices that could connect to the network. This would enable data to be transmitted in real time and would also enable the company to gain remote access to the units if required.

A suitable solution was sourced by the independent mobile computing and data collection consultancy, Spirit Data Capture Limited. Spirit has been responsible for providing and maintaining all of J D Williams' mobile data capture requirements for the last seven or eight years. During this time, it has supplied the company with hundreds of handheld devices, including many Motorola units. Its services have included undertaking site surveys to establish access connection point requirements when RF (radio frequency) technology is required.

Spirit recommended Motorola MC55 Enterprise Digital Assistants (EDAs) and SOTI MobiControl software. The MC55 is an enhanced mobile computer with advanced voice and data capabilities. It has been specifically designed to meet the demands of mobile / field workers and is lightweight but rugged. It includes a camera, barcode scanner, wireless connectivity and GPS functionality.

The SOTI MobiControl software enables companies to deploy and manage their mobile solutions quickly and easily, whilst also maximising the devices'

efficiency and effectiveness. Organisations can remotely monitor, track and support their mobile handheld units across a diverse range of networks, saving time, money and trouble. Through its cloud computing services, MobiControl also provides access to a wealth of hardware and software capabilities over the Internet.

Joe Fisher, J D Williams' Project Manager, comments: "The Motorola MC55 devices and MobiControl software are now being used by our Direct Despatch team. MobiControl allows the Motorola units to be locked down whenever necessary to ensure that users are unable to gain network connections to site and downloading opportunities that could corrupt the installed software.

"It also allows the IT team based at Shaw to gain remote control access if our Expeditors are experiencing difficulties whilst visiting one of the many supplier sites. This means that the problem can be potentially fixed while the Expeditor is still at the supplier's site, thus avoiding the time and cost of a wasted visit. The new system also enables us to carry out remote access software repair."

Joe concludes: "MobiControl is an excellent companion for the Motorola MC55 units. Spirit has provided us with a full, all-round package for hardware and software solutions, integrated with exceptional maintenance support from their partners. If Spirit continues to be competitively priced and to provide the levels of support they currently do, there is no reason why we shouldn't continue to use them for years to come."

ENDS (670 words)

Notes for Editors: Spirit Data Capture is based in Sutton Weaver, Cheshire. The company is an independent mobile computing and data capture house, with an in-depth knowledge of the latest wireless and mobile computing technologies which boost productivity and profitability.

Spirit's capabilities include software application development, mobile computing technology (e.g. rugged mobile computers), wireless network implementations, maintenance and other services. Its extensive client base includes a diverse array of organisations in the utilities, field service, transport and logistics, healthcare, government and manufacturing sectors.

For more information, please contact Helen Jones. Tel: 01928 718800; Email: helen.jones@spiritdatacapture.co.uk; Website: www.spiritdatacapture.co.uk.

For press information, please contact Phil Allcock at Allcock Public Relations, on: 02380 849953.