

# Field Technicians at Portsmouth Water Eliminate Paperwork with an Interchange Mobility Solution

When Portsmouth Water, an independent water supply company serving over 280,000 customers in and around Portsmouth, south-east England, needed a reliable partner to provide a customised application for its field service team it turned to Interchange

## The challenge

Portsmouth Water has a long tradition of providing both a high standard of safe drinking water and exemplary customer service. In a report issued by Ofwat, the government regulatory agency, in January 2004, Portsmouth Water was identified as the most efficient water company in England and Wales for both operating and capital maintenance efficiency.

Water maintenance plays a vital role in providing potable water to millions. The field engineers at Portsmouth Water were spending a great deal of their time on the road visiting customers all across the region. To receive vital information about the next job or close down a completed call out, staff had to travel back to the company's headquarters in Havant to fill out the requisite paperwork. This labour-intensive process not only increased staff travelling time, it also reduced how many calls each engineer could handle in a day.

## The solution

When Interchange analysed the requirement with the Portsmouth Water team it was identified that a key need would be to both minimise the "in use" cost of operation and keep the service team in the field to maximise productivity; to do this the system had to:

- Be capable of being installed and managed "over the air"
- Meet Portsmouth Water's current needs and be flexible for adaptation as new requirements became known
- Include systems' integration with its back office systems
- Include a "train the trainer" approach to enable Portsmouth Water's internal team to manage and develop the solution after the initial implementation

Interchange Group then recommended a BlackBerry® solution in combination with application tool sets. The solution would integrate seamlessly with the company's existing software package, to enable engineers to complete and submit job forms in real time. Engineers can receive electronic job sheets and send emails on the move, as well as access their Outlook calendars. All information relating to the status of jobs is now dispatched straight to the BlackBerry® smartphone.

In delivering this bespoke requirement Interchange was able to benefit from its wide range of ICT and systems' integration skills and experience in developing, delivering and supporting

a wide range of standard and customised remote or mobile working technology solutions.

## The benefits

The Interchange solution offers two main advantages. The first one is zero paperwork: engineers no longer have to manually print over 53,000 forms, recovering valuable staff resources. The second advantage is improved productivity. Making the necessary tools available to engineers on their BlackBerry smartphone has reduced the amount of time spent driving back and forth to Havant. Thanks to the Interchange solution, Portsmouth Water reports an increase in the number of jobs each engineer can complete in a week, helping to maintain the company's position as one of the most efficient water authorities in the UK.

Rod Porteous, Distribution Engineer, Portsmouth Water, comments: "Communication is key for our business. Our field engineers rely on accurate, swift information on the move. By using the Interchange solution, jobs can be dispatched to engineers on the road and all paperwork can be completed on site."

"By eliminating the need to return to base to complete paperwork, our response rate to customer call outs has improved dramatically - the equivalent of a working month annually. This time can now be spent further improving our services to ensure our customers remain the most satisfied in the UK," concludes Porteous.

## What Interchange can do for your business

With a wide range of ICT skills and over 30 years experience in providing effective technology solutions; Interchange can combine the right mix of skills and expertise to develop the right solution for your business.

We will manage the entire process for you from inception to delivery and provide post delivery support in the most appropriate manner. With a full team of software developers in-house, we can mix and match hardware and software requirements; provide off the shelf or bespoke software solutions; or even tailor our own support systems to meet your exact requirements.

 **BlackBerry**  
Alliance Elite Member

