



BlackBerry Customer Success

QVC optimises business performance by giving managers access to real-time metrics with BlackBerry solution

The QVC shopping network began broadcasting on November 24th, 1986. Since then, QVC - which stands for "Quality, Value, Convenience", has become one of America's best known retail brands. QVC UK launched on October 1st 1993, followed by operations in other markets, including Germany, Italy and Japan. Today QVC reaches some 144 million homes across the globe and employs 12,000 people.

KEY BENEFITS

- Secure, instant access to real-time business metrics
- Easy centralised management
- Built-in high availability
- Remote access to business continuity plans

THE CHALLENGE

QVC UK operates from two sites in the UK, one in London and one near Liverpool, and the company's managers spend a large portion of their time travelling between the two locations. The channel operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, broadcasting 17 hours of live TV daily. Its busiest times are at midnight and on weekends. Because QVC UK staff work at different times of the day in different locations, communications can be a challenge. "We wanted to give people as much flexibility as possible when it came to communicating with each other. We wanted them to be able to exchange email without having to lug around a notebook," says Richard Davies, Enterprise Service Manager, QVC UK.

Another challenge was rooted in QVC's business model, which is based on what the company calls "sales events". Each event is a TV show dedicated to selling through the product stock in the company's warehouse. A successful sales event requires that the show stay on air only as long as is required to sell the available stock. "Without visibility of stock, we could be selling things that have already sold out, which disappoints customers and wastes airtime," says Davies, "and if there's a problem in the warehouse, products don't get shipped on time, which isn't good for business either." As a result, QVC UK wanted to give managers real-time access to key performance indicators without requiring them to open their laptops or come into the office.

THE SOLUTION

Four years ago, when QVC UK began actively searching for a solution, it quickly set its sights on the BlackBerry® platform. The first reason for this decision was that QVC UK's parent company in the US was already using a BlackBerry solution, which meant it met the company's security policies. "We really liked the centralised management of devices and the ability to kill a device remotely if it goes missing," says Davies. Secondly, as he explains, "it fits well with the Lotus Domino infrastructure, which we use for email." Finally, QVC UK was intrigued by the BlackBerry® Mobile Data System, a framework that QVC wanted to use to push real-time business metrics to managers using BlackBerry® Browser applications. When he compared the BlackBerry solution to other solutions available, says Davies, "there was no credible alternative at the time, from an enterprise point of view. The BlackBerry solution was the most business-ready on the market."

“The BlackBerry solution is business critical and we couldn’t imagine not having it.”

Richard Davies
Enterprise Server Manager
QVC UK

Industry: Retail

Region: UK

Solution:

BlackBerry® Enterprise Server

Email Platform: Lotus® Domino®

With over 30 years experience in implementing technology solutions for remote and mobile working, Interchange Group is a leading supplier of integrated voice and mobile data solutions and works with leading Carriers such as O2, BT and T-Mobile to provide packaged and custom mobile applications, consulting, support, outsourcing and managed services based on the BlackBerry® platform.

QVC UK began by installing a test environment of half a dozen BlackBerry® smartphones coupled with a BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for IBM® Lotus® Domino® and according to Davies, the test quickly mushroomed into a full-fledged deployment. “As people saw the BlackBerry smartphones, they wanted them. We went from 60 to 100 to 250 devices.” The BlackBerry smartphones are used primarily for voice, email, calendar, contacts and real-time access to business data via the BlackBerry Browser. QVC UK’s IT staff also use Rove Mobile Admin Professional on their BlackBerry smartphones to remotely administer IT issues. Rove is a member of the BlackBerry® Alliance Program.

To handle this sudden growth in users and ensure that they benefited from high-quality support, QVC UK began working with Lan2Lan, also a member of the BlackBerry Alliance Program. Lan2Lan develops and delivers enterprise applications to the BlackBerry platform. For example, Lan2Lan is in the process of helping QVC to migrate to BlackBerry Enterprise Server 5.0, to take advantage of the built-in high availability and proactive monitoring features of the latest version.

To further enhance QVC UK’s business continuity plans, Lan2Lan oversaw the deployment of the InstaNet™ Business Continuity solution for BlackBerry from Interchange Group, also a member of the BlackBerry Alliance Program. InstaNet enables QVC UK to automatically push and store business continuity plans on BlackBerry smartphones for use in the event of a business disaster - even if the carrier network or the company’s communications infrastructure is no longer working.

QVC BENEFITS

The BlackBerry solution has lived up to QVC UK’s expectations. “The hours people work and where they’re working from are no longer an issue,” says Davies. “The BlackBerry solution keeps our business operating at the speed we require.” He also applauds the solution’s manageability. “Configuration of the BlackBerry Enterprise Server is very simple with Domino. It works out of the box and the administration of the system and the smartphones is very simple.”

But above all, the BlackBerry solution has revolutionised the way the company uses its business metrics. “Managers can keep an eye on the business from wherever they are and without having to use their laptops. They can immediately see if there’s a problem in the warehouse or if we’re about to sell out of a product,” explains Davies, who also credits remote access to real-time data with helping make QVC UK’s sales events more efficient. “We avoid disappointing customers if a product is sold out and it lets us quickly move on to the next sales event,” he says. “The BlackBerry solution is business critical and we couldn’t imagine not having it.”

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