

GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL SAVES 20% AND IMPROVES CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH BLACKBERRY SOLUTION FOR CARE PROVIDERS



The Direct and Care Services (DACs) department of Glasgow City Council provides a range of welfare services to the residents of Glasgow. One of the most important and complex is providing home care services to nearly 9,000 residents, many of whom are elderly. Home care enables many Glaswegians to stay in their community rather than moving into a care home or staying in hospital. The DACs has over 3,000 employees managed by a team of 300 managers and coordinators.

THE CHALLENGE

Customer records are managed using the CareTracker computer system developed in-house by the DACs IT team. Every month, 4,000 records are updated with changes to personal circumstances, such as new customers, changes to care plans, hospital discharge instructions, next of kin contact numbers and periods of absence.

Although equipped with BlackBerry® smartphones for email, the managers supervising the care providers had no mobile access to customer records. This often led to poor communication and misdirected resources. For example, if a care provider rang a customer's doorbell and didn't receive a response, there was no way to know if the customer was out of town with family or may have fallen and be unable to get to the door. They would phone their manager who would then have to phone through to the office-based duty team, and if they could not get through quickly to the duty team on the phone, standard operating procedure required them to call emergency services, perhaps unnecessarily.

Under pressure to "do better with the same" resources, Brendan Murphy, Head of ICT and Marketing at DACs, wanted to improve the channels and lines of communication and make his investment in IT "work a little harder."

THE SOLUTION

David Cassidy, Service Delivery Manager, saw that his department wasn't making the most of its BlackBerry smartphones. "I noticed a business problem and thought BlackBerry smartphones could help with it."

Cassidy began developing a BlackBerry smartphone application for the CareTracker system using the BlackBerry plug-in for Microsoft® Visual Studio® and BlackBerry® Mobile Data System. He and his team created an application that would give coordinators secure and direct access to customer records on their BlackBerry smartphones and inform them in real-time of any customer changes.

BENEFITS

**1/3 OF THE COST
OF DEPLOYING LAPTOPS**

**ESTIMATED 20%
SAVINGS TO BACK
OFFICE COSTS**

**SECURE AND
DISCREET SOLUTION**

**IMPROVED
CUSTOMER SERVICE**

"Thanks to the BlackBerry solution, we can take on new staff and new services without having to add overheads."

Brendan Murphy,
Head of ICT and Marketing
at the Direct and Care Services
department of Glasgow City Council

They then ran a four-week pilot with one manager and seven coordinators. Before equipping the pilot group Cassidy briefed them and showed them how it worked. "They knew how to use BlackBerry already and the application uses the same interface, so they were comfortable with it," says Cassidy, "It was a success from the start."

The application has three main functions:

- It pushes a list of customer record changes out to coordinators, based on the post codes and street addresses they cover. It gives the user access to the entire customer record: from the overall care plan to details such as the family doctor and house-key holders.
- A search function lets the coordinator quickly look up the records of a customer and dial any number found directly from the application.
- Finally, the application includes a phone book of useful numbers, such as local hospitals, social work offices and back office contacts.

As Cassidy explains, "It puts the power in the hands of the front line workers." Based on the success of the pilot scheme, this BlackBerry application is currently being rolled out to all 300 managers and supervisors.

THE BENEFITS

The first benefit was quick adoption by the supervisors. As Cassidy says, "usually when you release new software people are not always willing to adopt it. But they were really happy." Murphy adds that, "the BlackBerry is very intuitive. Not one device has been returned to us by a member of staff who's said 'it's too difficult for me.'"

The BlackBerry solution is perfectly suited to the work of the supervisors. Accessing the data is instantaneous and in real time; the supervisors no longer waste time trying to call the duty staff to retrieve information from a customer file. It is especially handy at night and during the holiday season, when a smaller number of staff runs the duty team. Moreover, no more mistakes are made during the transmission of information, which wasn't the case when details were given over the phone and written down by hand.

Another added benefit is that the BlackBerry smartphone is discreet. "In certain areas, if people think there's something valuable in the supervisor's car, they'll take it. The BlackBerry smartphone protects them because it's not visible and protects the data on the system thanks to the built-in security features," says Murphy. He goes on to add, "if I had equipped 300 people with laptops, it would have cost me three times more in terms of capital outlay and required 2-3 more staff just for the support. I didn't have to take anyone on for the BlackBerry solution."

The efficiencies created by this BlackBerry deployment are having positive financial results for the DACS. Murphy says, "home services are growing, but the back office is shrinking. Thanks to the BlackBerry solution, we can take on new staff and new services without having to add overheads." He estimates that the application has doubled the ROI of the device. "The BlackBerry smartphones are 100% more useful now," he says. In addition, he calculates that the BlackBerry solution will generate approximately 20% savings in the back office when fully deployed, by enabling him to move back office staff out into front line functions.

For further information: www.blackberry.com/go/success

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BLACKBERRY CASE STUDY
GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

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