



Leicestershire Constabulary aims to increase community presence by 30% with BlackBerry solution

Leicestershire Constabulary provides policing services to nearly one million people in a 2,500 square kilometre area in central England. Leicestershire Constabulary works in partnership with local residents and other agencies to increase police presence in the community, which helps to dissuade criminal and antisocial behaviour as well as accelerate the solving of crimes.

The Challenge

Efforts to make officers more visible in the community were running into a roadblock. According to Sanjiv Pattani of the Constabulary's Mobile Data Team, desktop-based computer systems were tying frontline officers to the police station. "We performed a very detailed study of the force and discovered that officers were spending at least one third of a nine-hour shift at their desks, accessing or recording information in our computer systems. This was the starting point for a mobile information solution which would enable the officers to be more visible, stay out of the station longer and reduce bureaucracy by letting them enter data on the beat."

The Solution

Leicestershire Constabulary decided to deploy a two-pronged solution. In September 2008 they issued BlackBerry® smartphones from Orange to 450 beat officers and community support officers (PCSO) who patrol on foot or bicycle. "These officers are at the front line, engaging with the community and responding to incidents. We thought the best way to provide them with mobile access to our information systems would be with BlackBerry," says Pattani.

Working with Orange, their network partner, to evaluate all possible approaches to the problem, Leicestershire Constabulary chose the BlackBerry® solution for its out-of-the-box security, long battery life, impressive data speeds and large, high-resolution displays. "We took a look at a number of other forces that had deployed mobile solutions in different forms, including other smartphones and PDAs, and found that BlackBerry smartphones didn't suffer from the shortcomings that the other devices did, like a short battery life," explains Pattani.

To underline the importance of the BlackBerry solution to the force, the first people to be issued BlackBerry smartphones were beat officers. "They're the people who make the best use of the solution. No member of the senior management team or the chief officer group received a BlackBerry before the frontline officers were equipped. It was quite symbolic," says Pattani.

Benefits

Improved efficiency

Time savings of up to 3 hours per day

Improved public service

Greater police visibility

 **BlackBerry**

Customer Success Program

In the first phase of the deployment, the frontline officers are using the BlackBerry smartphones for voice as well as email, calendar and web access to the Constabulary's intranet, via the BlackBerry® Enterprise Server on the Orange network. Officers can use the force's intelligence systems using the BlackBerry® Browser and access policy documents if they need information about how to handle a particular kind of incident. The smartphone's high-resolution display and keyboard make it easy to enter information and read the web pages.

Thanks to the BlackBerry solution's high level of out-of-the box security, all information transmitted between the smartphones and the computer systems is encrypted. "Another one of the reasons we picked the BlackBerry solution was because it is accredited by the CESG (the British government's National Technical Authority for Information Assurance) for information confidentiality and security."

Users were given training by the Constabulary's project partner, Berkley Technical Services, a BlackBerry Alliance Partner. "We're very happy with the support and service offered by Berkley which devised and is implementing our deployment programme. They configure the devices, provide the training and maintain and support the BlackBerry solution." Thanks to the quality of the solution and the training, user adoption has been "very positive," says Pattani. "They're really enthusiastic."

The Benefits

One of these enthusiastic users is PCSO Vincent Preston, who's been patrolling the Wigston neighbourhood on the south side of Leicester by bicycle since 2005. After receiving his device, Preston became an avid BlackBerry smartphone user, exploiting its full potential on a daily basis. For example, he emails himself the daily briefing so he can consult it on his BlackBerry smartphone while he's on patrol. When he's in a hurry, he records voice memos instead of writing messages and emails them to his colleagues. At incidents, he takes statements and fills out Microsoft® Word forms on the smartphone using Documents To Go for BlackBerry. He then emails the files to himself, so he can cut and paste the text into the appropriate IT system. He even uses the camera to "take photos of evidence or a scene, so I can email them to my sergeant to get his opinion." The control room sends appointment requests directly to Preston's smartphone.

Preston regularly accesses the force's IT systems using his BlackBerry smartphone. He can consult the voter database to check the address of an individual or the car registration database to verify ownership of a vehicle. When checking a person's identity, Preston can access different systems to see if the person has a criminal record, is wanted for a crime or is on the national list of missing persons. "I can check their photo and confirm if they're the person being looked for," says Preston. Finally, he can also consult the license database for stores and bars that are authorised to sell alcohol.

"It enables me to have real-time intelligence whilst out on the street, making me more proactive and putting me out more in the community, which lets me improve my service," says Preston. Because he no longer has to go back to the station to perform an inquiry or follow up on a hunch, Preston can resolve incidents faster. "Recently while I was on cycle patrol I recognised a woman but couldn't remember where I'd seen her face. I stopped and consulted the daily brief on my BlackBerry," explains Preston. The woman turned out to be a suspect in a shop theft. Preston stopped her, checked her identity and she was arrested. He adds: "Without the BlackBerry I couldn't have done that. It's easily saving me two to three hours a day. I wouldn't know what to do without it."

As the BlackBerry solution is quite new, the force is still in the process of measuring its business benefits. "I can tell you officers are spending much more time out of the police station and in the community thanks to the BlackBerry solution. We have put mechanisms in place for measuring the benefits, which will be used by the National Police Improvement Agency to calculate the return on investment of the solution. Our goal is to eliminate 30 percent of time wasted, and I'm sure we're well on our way," says Pattani.

Pattani says that the next step in the BlackBerry solution roll-out is the integration of other, more complex systems onto the BlackBerry smartphones. The Constabulary plans to provide access to the Command & Control system, which is the dispatch tool that sends officers out on calls. "Officers deployed to an incident will be able to access the information that's come in from the caller, making them better prepared when they arrive on the scene." Pattani is sure this will help the force to further improve the quality of service. "By using the BlackBerry solution to personalise the intervention of the officer, it will reassure the caller and speed up the handling of the incident."

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