



City council lowers costs and improves usability by deploying BlackBerry solution

Located in northwest France, the city of Le Havre is a major French port and industrial centre. With a population of nearly 200,000, it is one of France's 20 largest cities. The city council and the greater Le Havre metropolitan council employ over 4,500 people.

The Challenge

The city council of Le Havre was an early believer in the benefits of mobile email. The councillors, the general services manager and deputy general managers spend much of their time outside of city hall and keeping them connected and abreast of their ever changing schedules was very complicated and time consuming. Decisions would be delayed when important emails went unanswered. Diaries were maintained by secretaries, who devoted a large portion of their day to calling officials with scheduling changes. Mix-ups inevitably occurred.

In an attempt to deal with these issues, in 2006 the city council deployed a handheld-based solution, restricting it to just over 30 users (councillors and managers) due to the cost. It quickly became evident that it needed to be improved. The council needed a solution where the devices had more stable and reliable software, that were secure and user-friendly, making it quick and easy to download attachments, and on a cost-effective data plan.

Within just a few months the situation needed to be addressed and it was time to find a replacement solution.

The Solution

After researching the market, the council's IT department narrowed its choice to a BlackBerry® solution, but wanted assurances about data security. This prompted the department's security manager to conduct an exhaustive audit that showed a BlackBerry solution would meet all the council's data security criteria, including data encryption, password protection and remote management.

Benefits

Faster decision-making

Reduced email backlog

No more diary mix-ups

Fewer needless trips to the office

End-to-end data security

Stable and reliable solution

 **BlackBerry**

Customer Success Program

In June 2007, the council bought its first BlackBerry® smartphones and a BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for Microsoft® Exchange in order to conduct a pilot program.

The test was the turning point. User feedback was unanimously positive: the BlackBerry solution was what they'd been waiting for. "Our General Services Manager wanted to test it personally. He was delighted. Receiving email and calendar items was fast. Plus we'd selected the BlackBerry® Pearl™, which was light and easy to use. The BlackBerry solution offered nothing but advantages," explains Amandine Wilhem, an IT Technician at Le Havre city council IT department.

As a result of the pilot, and the positive first experiences, the IT department deployed BlackBerry smartphones to the 30 users of the city council. The smartphones are used for voice, mobile email and calendaring. When the members of the metropolitan council saw how enthusiastic their city council colleagues were, the decision was made to extend the BlackBerry solution to more than 20 additional users. Today the IT department manages nearly 90 BlackBerry smartphone users and two BlackBerry Enterprise Servers. In addition, some of the council's users also use the smartphones to access their personal email accounts via BlackBerry® Internet Service.

The Benefits

The primary benefit for users is that they now have a mobile email solution that meets their expectations. Gone are the days of bulky, unstable devices and slow connections: the BlackBerry solution is significantly more reliable than the old handheld-based solution and the wireless connection is permanent. Push email and calendar means there's no user intervention required. "They find the mobile email fast and the smartphone's screen easy to read," says Wilhem.

According to Wilhem and her colleague Delphine Jouen, the BlackBerry solution has made the users and city council operations more efficient. Mobile email has led to faster decision making. The mobile calendar means fewer missed appointments, fewer trips to the office to print out schedules, and fewer diary updates over the phone between the secretaries and their managers. An added benefit is that the users are no longer faced with a backlog of email upon returning from extended lengths out of the office.

The IT department has found administration of the BlackBerry solution very easy. In particular, they appreciate being able to manage devices remotely and to wipe a device when it goes missing.

Moreover, because the BlackBerry solution optimises bandwidth usage by compressing data, the IT department has been able to migrate users to more cost-effective data plans with their mobile operator, while continuing to offer a better mobile email experience.

"With BlackBerry smartphones, we've realised the advantages of mobility while significantly lowering the per-user costs. We can support more users with the same budget, which opens up the possibility of extending the BlackBerry solution to other users," says Jouen.

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Delphine Jouen,
IT Technician
Le Havre city council