



Italian council improves productivity and cuts costs with the BlackBerry solution

The Regional Council of Veneto represents, protects, and provides public services for all the citizens of the Italian region of Veneto. The council's areas of responsibility cover the regional entities through which public services are performed, legal affairs companies for economic activities, and public health companies (AULSS) for social care and health services.

The Challenge

A considerable number of employees make up the Regional Council of Veneto's management team and their roles are diverse. When you add the councillors, politicians and those people who are responsible for public services or security such as civil protection or emergency health, the size of the council's team becomes quite significant.

The common challenge that all employees faced was the pressing need to be able to communicate with the main offices and with a disparate range of colleagues while constantly on-the-go. Politicians needed to stay in touch as they travelled and during the many meetings which filled up their agendas. Meanwhile the public service employees needed to be constantly connected to quickly respond in the case of emergencies.

The council's IT department was looking for a single communication solution which would suit the various users and which could be managed centrally and deployed quickly.

"Our organisation is composed of hundreds of mobile workers," explains Gianluigi Cogo, Information System Director of the Regional Council of Veneto. "In the past we tried to satisfy their needs for mobile communication by equipping them with cellular telephones and WAP terminals through which they could receive web-based electronic mail. However, centrally controlling the costs and trying to respect company policy was an extremely difficult task with this system."

So the department had a clear objective: find an integrated mobile communication solution which would improve company communications and increase work-force productivity. This solution must also deliver centralised control of costs and administration and ensure the application of company policies.

Benefits

Problem free integration with existing systems

Improved responsiveness for public service employees

Improved productivity for mobile workers

Significant cost savings

Controlled implementation of internal policies

The Solution

The Regional Council of Veneto decided to implement a BlackBerry® Enterprise Solution and distributed BlackBerry® smartphones on a trial basis to about twenty users. The IT managers were able to quickly and securely integrate the BlackBerry® solution with the pre-existing operating system, as well as with the network infrastructure without any extra cost or the need for technical support.

The smartphones were activated in a very short time and the users began using them without any need for training. The QWERTY keyboard which was already familiar to the users combined with the intuitive navigation meant the BlackBerry smartphones were very user-friendly. The users immediately and enthusiastically welcomed the ability to access e-mail, Internet, Intranet, and voice calls through a single device.

The ability to centrally manage the solution was also a key element in the council's decision to extend the implementation of Blackberry smartphones. It meant that the IT managers were able to apply company policies which restrict the use of the devices in order to keep costs under control.

Today, 250 employees of the Regional Council of Veneto are using the BlackBerry solution to manage email, access the company Intranet, and exchange Instant Messages, and the deployment is extending rapidly. The number of BlackBerry smartphone users at the council is soon to reach 300.

The Benefits

"Introducing the BlackBerry solution has been like a small revolution in our complex organisation," states Cogo. "It started a chain reaction. Now everybody wants a BlackBerry smartphone so that they can work even when out of the office in order to be more efficient and to handle the needs of the community in a timely manner."

Since implementing the BlackBerry solution, the council has seen a dramatic reduction in the cost of telephone calls. With users able to manage e-mail and messaging systems remotely, they are using the smartphones less for voice calls and more for IM to communicate with colleagues. This has not only improved the quality of internal communication, but has also led to noticeable cost savings for the organisation.

The synchronisation of the calendar, tasks and contacts as well as the ability to view and modify documents allows managers to work on projects and presentations even while they are travelling. Ultimately the council employees enjoy a much heightened level of productivity during working hours and a reduction to down time.

"We had the need to mobilise e-mail for hundreds of workers whose jobs differed from one another: from politicians to forest rangers. The BlackBerry solution allows us to distribute an efficient and centrally manageable communication platform which allows us to control costs and policies in a way which was not possible before," concludes Cogo.

The BlackBerry solution also allows all of the smartphones to be set up centrally according to the council's policy on usage. It allows the IT team to have better control and also provides a standardised communication flow for all the users. The Regional Council of Veneto now plans to develop personalised applications for its different users, making use of applications such as GPS to further enhance the productivity gains the solution delivers.

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