

SSM DEPLOYS BLACKBERRY SOLUTION AND INTERAK FOR REAL-TIME FIELD SALES MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVES CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SALES



SSM is one of Turkey's top medical supplies companies, manufacturing surgical sutures and exclusively distributing several major brands of imported medical supplies. The company is based in Istanbul, with a 15-member sales team that is responsible for field sales to local hospitals and clinics.

THE CHALLENGE

Utku Oguz, managing director of SSM, was unhappy with the company's paper-based, asynchronous sales force management system. The sales management team at headquarters could not easily monitor and work with the salesforce's activities in the field. The sales team used their PCs to schedule their sales calls on the company's CRM system. But once in the field, there was no way to track their progress until they filed their call reports. In addition, reports would often be filed days after the visit, which would lead to lost sales opportunities. "The process was never as accurate and real-time as it should have been," says Oguz.

THE SOLUTION

SSM knew what they needed: real-time visibility of what was going on in the field — but couldn't find an existing mobile solution capable of providing it. Oguz attended tradeshows in search of the right combination of software and hardware, and finally turned to Interak Software Group, an independent software vendor based in Ankara, with their requirements.

After listening to SSM's needs, Interak came back with an innovative BlackBerry® solution that combined a bespoke smartphone application with the device's BlackBerry® Browser. Mobile email and web access would be provided using BlackBerry® Internet Service

At the start of each sales call, the sales person launches the bespoke application, which timestamps the call or visit record with the time, date and GPS coordinates of the BlackBerry® smartphone's built-in GPS. At the end of the visit, the salesperson enters their notes and records how many samples and sales documents were distributed, using the BlackBerry Browser and a web interface for SSM's CRM system.

THE BENEFITS

SSM was immediately taken with the solution's simplicity. The sales team continues to enter their schedule of sales calls in the company's CRM system from their PCs but now, when they are in the field, they are able to consult their schedule using the BlackBerry Browser, and update it with any changes or last minute appointments.

BENEFITS

INCREASED NUMBER OF SALES CALLS

REAL-TIME VISIBILITY OF SALESFORCE ACTIVITY

HIGH USER ADOPTION AND SATISFACTION

IMPROVED CUSTOMER SERVICE

"We've already reached an average of 18 sales calls a day – a significant increase over the old system – within just a couple months of the deployment."

Utku Oguz,
Managing Director of SSM

As a first step in to salesforce automation, SSM appreciates the lightweight, "quick-win" approach. They were quick to develop the Java application for the BlackBerry smartphone, provide a web interface to the CRM application and deploy the solution on the devices, which are also used for phone, email and SMS.

"User adoption and satisfaction continue to be very high", says Oguz, "the sales team weren't good about filing reports because it took time away from making calls. Now they can make more calls in the same space of time. They can also file their expense reports and the system reminds them to reorder samples and documentation when they are running low," adding, "almost like having a personal assistant."

Most importantly, however, the management team now has real-time visibility of the sales team's activities across the country. They can see if they are reaching their quota of sales calls and can respond to customer requests almost immediately, which has made SSM very responsive to customers' needs, something they really appreciate.

The sales team is also pleased with the unobtrusive nature of the BlackBerry solution. "In a hospital setting, there's no room or time to pull out a PC to jot down information. Sales calls are often held in a hallway or while walking from one hospital ward to another. With the BlackBerry solution, they can consult the system discreetly," says Oguz, who goes on to highlight another advantage: "Doctors are very busy and appreciate short and concise sales calls. When a salesperson goes into a meeting, a 'do not disturb' flag appears next to their name on the CRM system. It tells the staff at headquarters not to phone the salesperson during the visit." This provides the doctor with better service as the salesperson is able to give them their undivided attention.

SSM is convinced that the BlackBerry solution will increase sales. Oguz says, "We've already reached an average of 18 sales calls a day – a significant increase over the old system – within just a couple months of the deployment." The company and Interak are currently preparing for the next step: pushing CRM information directly to the BlackBerry smartphones using BlackBerry® Enterprise Server.

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

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