

CASE STUDY: GREYSTONE PROVIDES MICROSOFT® WINDOWS MOBILE SOLUTION TO KEEP CUMBERLAND FARMS' FIELD REPS ON THE MOVE



Using Microsoft® SharePoint Server, Microsoft® SQL Server, and Microsoft® .NET, Greystone Solutions built a Microsoft® Windows Mobile-based solution for Cumberland Farms. The solution runs on smart phones and enables the company's field reps to electronically capture report data as it is attained. As a result, Cumberland Farms has been able to speed reporting times while also manning field reps with the information they need to make proper store evaluations. Better remote access to information has also helped improve corporate business processes and decision-making, while still keeping IT costs manageable.

Situation

Once a one-cow dairy, Cumberland Farms now operates a network of more than 1,100 convenience stores and gas stations in about a dozen eastern seaboard states from Maine to Florida. The first convenience-store operator in New England, Cumberland was founded in 1939, is headquartered in Canton, MA, and employs over 7,000 people.

The company employs 30 field reps in the New England area, whose main responsibilities are to monitor and evaluate 300 gas station store locations to inspect for safety, environmental law compliance, and store presentation. They are also charged with inspecting the fuel prices of competing gas stations. This process was almost entirely conducted through the use of cell phones, paper notes, and manual reporting. The company's field reps had no way to access and view history and trend information from the corporate office.

As a result, field reps would make notes as they traveled from location to location and then when they returned back to the office later that day or the next, they would input all of the same information into the company's reporting system. This redundant inputting not only increased reporting times for the company, left more room for human error. Cumberland Farms engaged Greystone Solutions to implement a mobile solution that would keep their field reps on the move while on the road.

Solution Overview

Customer Profile

Cumberland Farms delivers value and convenience to its customers through a network of stores and gas stations along the east coast.

Service Offerings

Custom Application Development
Mobile Application Development

Industry

Retail Outlets and Gas Stations

Challenge

Cumberland Farms needed to update a manual, labor intensive data entry process to reduce the opportunity for human error and improve reporting capabilities.

Solution

A mobile solution that enabled field staff to remotely report data using smartphones that securely communicate with corporate databases.

Microsoft Software Used

- Microsoft® SQL Server
- Microsoft® SharePoint Server
- Microsoft® Windows Mobile
- Microsoft® .NET

Benefits

- Increased reporting accuracy
- Expedited data transfer to corporate
- Improved communication between field staff and corporate

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CUMBERLAND FARMS CASE STUDY CONTINUED



Solution

Together with consultants from Greystone Solutions, Cumberland built a Microsoft® Windows Mobile™-based Treo 700w smartphone solution. The solution allows field reps to record and report data remotely, view trends, and communicate with corporate instantly regarding any store problems, price changes, or environmental issues.

Cumberland was concerned about tying into their existing Oracle database, thinking that an alternate technology would complicate the deployment, but Greystone assured them that by using Windows Mobile-based solution, they would be able to deploy a robust, fat-client solution that would provide the greatest flexibility, reliability, and user-ease, with the fewest complications.

The solution also helps reduce paperwork and makes field reps more productive by empowering them to submit their report findings from any location and any time. That same solution also provides field reps with the resources from Cumberland Farms' corporate database to help them turn-out more informed and better quality reports.

For More Information

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We look forward to hearing from you and hope you build your next project with Greystone!

Benefits

In deploying this solution, Cumberland substantially increased connectivity and communication between its remote staff and headquarters. The mobile solution is accelerating business, streamlining communication, and improving response times.

Improved Communication Restores Productivity

Cumberland field reps regain hours of time that would have otherwise been lost in making duplicate reporting entries. The solution also offers field reps a more flexible schedule. Field reps have the ability to fill-out and submit their reports as time is available. The Treo also lets them stay abreast of daily issues by tracking messages and responding to urgent calls without being distracted from their main responsibilities.

Reporting Accuracy Improved

As field reps at Cumberland use the Treos, their ability to make timely and better-qualified evaluations will improve. Having access to the corporate database allows field reps to view store histories and trends in order to most accurately report and react to the situation at hand.

Improved Data Transfer to Corporate

With the new mobile communication avenues, Cumberland will significantly reduce the response time for rectifying store issues. Improving the quality and speed of information transmitted from the field to the corporate office will also reduce problem-solving time. Cumberland plans to use the Treos for submitting report statistics, corporate database viewing, and sending e-mail. All of those actions take advantage of the robust capabilities of the Windows Mobile environment on the Treos. Field reps will have access to more accurate information resulting in better job performance.

