STOREWORKS

FACILITY MAINTENANCE SUPPORT TECHNICIANS MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY

Top-rated convenience store chain capitalizes on efficiency with the integration of a fully-supported, real-time case management solution.

An inability to respond quickly to maintenance issues can be detrimental to the success of any retailer, so when you're tasked with supporting 600 locations and six Distribution Centers, operating at full potential is critical.

Not only are facility operations impaired when issues aren't dealt with in a timely manner, customer service can suffer and reputation can be tarnished; none of which retailers can afford.

Recognizing this, one of the nation's largest convenience store (C-Store) chains decided to put their case management performance under the microscope, and when good was no longer good enough, the C-Store chain turned to Storeworks to develop and support a solution from start to finish.

DAY IN THE LIFE

In order to better understand the needs of the customer, Storeworks took a deep dive approach and inserted themselves into the daily world of the facility maintenance support technicians, conducting multiple site surveys and technician ridealongs.

Throughout the course of the analysis, Storeworks conducted interviews with team members focused on existing processes and methods, opened and closed maintenance cases, reviewed the necessary forms and paperwork required to fully process cases and observed firsthand the intricacies of the technician's daily duties.

The methodology in place prior to Storeworks' involvement was a two-piece solution consisting of a case management application accessed via store PCs and a thick client batch application running on a mobile device. While the solution was satisfactory, it took only a few hours for Storeworks to realize technicians were not operating at their full potential.

BECOMING TRULY MOBILE

"What the C-store chain was lacking was a truly mobile solution, capable of real-time data connectivity," said Storeworks President Troy Stelzer. "Technicians were in and out of their trucks, up and down ladders, on the roof, in the stores, etc., but they were always tethered to the store-level PC."

"Technicians routinely close 55 cases per week. The multitude of trips made between the PC and the actual point of maintenance quickly add up," said Stelzer. When asked how many more they could close if they weren't tethered to the store PC, they didn't hesitate to respond with 1-2 extra cases per day, per technician. So, in a four member division, 40 more cases could be closed per week simply by streamlining administration tasks and avoiding walking back and forth to the store PC.

"It became very clear that what they needed was a work-flow makeover coming at the hands of a more durable mobile computing device equipped with Sprint 3G data connectivity," said Stelzer.

Storeworks also observed that the desktop PC application timed out after five minutes. A large percentage of the maintenance issues the C-store faces require subtle adjustments to technology settings and monitoring the affect those adjustments have. The only place available to see those affects were on the desktop application.

Time spent applying the setting changes at the point of maintenance and returning to the PC was often outside of the five-minute window allotted by the desktop application. After timing out, technicians would have to sign back in, enter terminal mode, launch the application, identify the store they were inquiring about and then judge what the effect of their adjustments had been.

"The ability to support the desktop application on the mobile device quickly became a desirable function; a capability offered through a durable mobile computer enabled with real time data connectivity."

MAXIMIZING EFFICIENCY

With a need-to-have set of requirements identified, Storeworks scoured the market to find the ideal replacement for the mobile computing device. The durable, Sprint-enabled Motorola MC75 proved to be the best fit for the technicians. Storeworks customized each device for the individual technicians, activated their Sprint accounts, configured each unit with the desktop application, kitted the unit with a vehicle charger and dashboard mount and delivered each store-ready kit to the established maintenance divisions.

Within two months, all 200 technicians were equipped with a durable, fully-supported, Sprint-enabled mobile device. Complemented by Storeworks' recommended enterprise management software, SOTI mobile device manager, and Sprint's 87% coverage rate, technicians were able to vastly improve their call time and maintenance resolutions.

Post-deployment, Storeworks provides ongoing support by way of warranty assistance, repair facilitation, reconfiguration and device upgrades.

Storeworks' willingness to go above and beyond has led to a multitude of other projects with the C-store chain.

MC75 Mobile Computing Device