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Allan Barclay, Service Manager, Fife Council Building Services

power to you



Mobile working delivers 20% productivity gains for Fife Council



Fife is world famous as the home of golf with its rugged seaside courses at St Andrews and the neighbouring coastline attracting millions of visitors and inspiring movie makers.

Situated across the Firth of Forth, north of Edinburgh, are Fife's three principal towns, Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and Glenrothes. Nearby, part of the Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers are being built at the historic Rosyth dockyard, also the traditional home of many of the UK's nuclear submarines.

Fife Council was founded in 1996 and is the third largest local authority in Scotland. It keeps the streets clean, educates young people and adults, provides public transport, swimming baths and leisure centres, cares for the vulnerable – and much, much more – for a population of around 360,000 people.

Fife covers more than 500 square miles and includes lochs, mountains, large towns and rural hamlets along with hundreds of miles of coastline. This diverse geography presents challenges to the Council in the way it organises and delivers its services, especially those requiring visits by staff to homes, businesses or Council land and property.

Given the size of its territory and the constant drive to make tight budgets stretch further, the Council has been looking closely at mobile working as one area of improving front line services and developing a more productive and streamlined workforce.

Fresh approach

After analysing its working practices, the Council decided to trial a fresh approach to mobile working within its busy Housing Repairs teams - part of the Building Services department of Fife's large direct labour organisation.

Staff within the repairs teams had followed a traditional work pattern for decades, arriving at depots spread across Fife, picking up work, travelling to each job and then returning to the depot. The Council estimated that the paperwork created by even the most simple of jobs would pass through no fewer than 11 pairs of hands from the beginning to the end of the administration process.

Managers knew that opportunities to improve productivity and cut costs were being missed.

When a small team of electricians began using mobile phones to report back to a central control at the end of each job and to receive details of their next job, the potential for across the board improvements in efficiency and productivity was clear from the outset.

"Even using basic mobile communications we could see a huge opportunity to transform the way our people worked, from the number of jobs that could be completed each day to the way we procured supplies," says Allan Barclay, Service Manager within the Building Services department.

"What we needed was a solution that gave us a robust mobile device with all the functionality we need and reliable connectivity across our territory. With the two combined we could then take full advantage of these opportunities."

"Almost immediately we saw productivity increase significantly with around 20% more jobs completed each day. TotalMobile enables us to stay in touch with the team out on the road and send them directly to their next job without returning to the depot."

Allan Barclay, Service Manager, Fife Council Building Services

“This investment in TotalMobile is going to pay for itself in quick time and the savings and efficiencies will be multiplied when the roll-out to other trades is completed in the second half of 2012.”

Allan Barclay, Service Manager,
Fife Council Building Services

Speed up procurement

When the Council began a full tender process to appoint a partner to implement a mobile solution, Vodafone was identified as an approved supplier under public sector procurement rules.

Using the IT Managed Service framework agreement, Vodafone developed an integrated Enterprise Mobile Working Solution, including ruggedised device with SIM, combined with secure system connectivity and helpdesk support, all underpinned by robust Service Level Agreements (SLA).

TotalMobile from Vodafone is a flexible, easy way for mobile workers to be productive and stay connected, wherever they happen to be. For Fife Council, TotalMobile enables staff on the road to access back office systems through a simple to use application on the device.

“When we saw TotalMobile being demonstrated we knew absolutely that this was what we needed. After a full evaluation, we awarded the contract to Vodafone for an initial order of 350 handsets, applications and the full managed service solution,” explains Barclay.

Given their earlier experience of mobile working, the Council’s team of electricians was selected for the first phase of a rollout. Barclay recognised the importance of working closely with his electricians prior to the launch to make sure that the inevitable changes in traditional working patterns had their support – and that their invaluable experience had been taken into account.



Increased productivity

“The team could see immediately that the handset was excellent, robust and easy to use,” adds Barclay. “But it was a big transition for the electricians and at first they were concerned about losing control of their working day – but over time they realised that, in fact the opposite was the case!

“Almost immediately we saw productivity increasing significantly with around 20% more jobs completed each day. The TotalMobile solution enables us to stay in touch with the team on the road and to send them directly to their next job without returning to the depot.

“We were able to identify which items in an electrician’s van were most frequently used – and to use this information to guide procurement decisions, buy items in the right quantities, standardise products and reduce waste.

“Thanks to the new application there was a huge reduction in the amount of paperwork generated too as the details of each job are now transmitted electronically.

“Scheduling, stock control, billing, timesheets are now all taken care of through the handset, the application and the network, enabling us to greatly reduce the internal resources previously committed to these areas.

“Connectivity is excellent and it’s hugely reassuring to have the Vodafone organisation, network and managed service behind us. We know that we have their support should we need it,” says Barclay.



Value for money

"Nobody enjoys the reduction in paperwork more than electricians themselves. They now have much more control over their working day, using their handset is so much quicker and easier than filling in lots of forms manually, they achieve more and go straight home when their jobs are completed.

"This is a big step forward for Building Services. We are a trading organisation and we have to demonstrate our efficiency in order to show value for money and so safeguard our future.

"This investment in TotalMobile is going to pay for itself in quick time and the savings and efficiencies will be multiplied when the roll out to other trades is completed in the second half of 2012."

Concludes Barclay: "These developments are also being watched with great interest by other Council departments and there is no doubt that the initial success of this in Building Services could be replicated elsewhere in areas where our people are travelling to deliver services, such as health and social care for example."

Significant benefits

- Workforce productivity has increased by 20%, thanks to TotalMobile
- Time consuming and resource intensive paper-based systems have been replaced by instant, electronic data transmission, saving money and streamlining processes
- Procurement of supplies is now based upon live usage data, reported daily through mobile handsets
- Return on Investment (RoI) is swift and the solution can be easily applied across many Council functions and services
- Council employees are empowered and motivated by taking control of their working day and operating efficiently

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