



ROYAL MAIL

BlackBerry solution delivers improved business productivity for Royal Mail.
Arrival of BlackBerry® Enterprise Server takes stress off the IT department.

THE CHALLENGE

With external turnover of just over £9 billion, Royal Mail Group is the UK's biggest postal services provider, serving the entire UK through its mail services, Post Office® branches and parcels businesses. It directly employs around 190,000 people in the UK.

Royal Mail Group has undergone huge changes in recent years. In 2002 the company was losing over £1 million a day on its operations and, faced with the introduction of competition in the UK mail market, the company recognised that it had to change to survive.

In just three years, Royal Mail Group has overhauled its frontline operations, streamlined its transport network, introduced more efficient mail centres and greatly improved customer service.

The company's focus on improved operations and customer service made immediate access to company information systems vital for senior managers to facilitate faster decision making when away from their desks or while travelling between operational sites in the UK. The first step was to give senior managers mobile access to their email.

THE SOLUTION

Royal Mail Group had unsuccessfully experimented in the past using PDAs to give senior managers mobile email. But no single solution had ever gained widespread adoption. In 2004 David Burden, the Group Technology Director, was faced with what he calls the "PDA confusion" that reigned at Royal Mail Group at the time. "The IT department was stressed out trying to support the multitude of different devices that people in the company were using," he says.

At the time he was trying to resolve the mobile email problem, Burden received a phone call from Allan Leighton, Royal Mail Group's Chairman, who had just returned from a board meeting in North America where he had seen one of his peers using a BlackBerry® smartphone. "Allan immediately saw how BlackBerry could improve communication between senior managers and give them mobile access to our corporate email system," says Burden. "Coincidentally, my team had recently begun looking into the BlackBerry solution, and Allan's feedback confirmed what our research was saying."

The decision was quickly made to test the BlackBerry solution. In early 2005 Royal Mail Group organised a three-month trial period using BlackBerry® Enterprise Server™ for IBM® Lotus® Domino®. At first, only directors, their direct reports and a couple of senior IT people were issued BlackBerry smartphones. "I have to admit we were very cautious at the start in terms of user adoption and cost," notes Burden.

Their fears turned out to be unfounded; users immediately embraced their BlackBerry smartphones, and the trial was rapidly extended to 75 users. "People were eager to have a BlackBerry device," says Steve Taylor, Head of Business Productivity. "In fact, after just one month of testing, the IT department was being pressured to expand the BlackBerry deployment even further."

Today, 400 managers and salespeople use the BlackBerry solution for email, calendaring and voice communications. Users can select the BlackBerry smartphone model of their choice from the mobile network provider's portfolio of devices. The deployment of BlackBerry smartphones went so smoothly that Group IT decided to devolve responsibility to the Business Units. "If the budget owner can show that a BlackBerry solution will improve their productivity, we let them do it," says Philip Stanton, Business Productivity Manager.

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THE ADVANTAGES

"Deploying BlackBerry has given a boost to our drive to modernise the Royal Mail," comments Burden. He says he was amazed how everyone who was given a BlackBerry smartphone "took to it." "It even brought non-techies into the email fold," he adds.

The BlackBerry solution has improved communications efficiency at Royal Mail Group. "It has transformed the way people interact at work by increased ad hoc communications, which in turn has accelerated and simplified decision making," says Burden. The impact of BlackBerry smartphone use on business activity has been profound. "Even the Chief Executive is known to answer emails in minutes, if he's not in a meeting," says Burden. According to Stanton, users credit the BlackBerry solution with drying up the sea of unread emails that used to accumulate in their inboxes during prolonged absences. "I recently spent two days at our training centre. During breaks I was able to handle emails and make calls with the BlackBerry smartphone. I didn't dread going back to my office, because I knew no emails were waiting for me."

On a cultural level, the BlackBerry solution has been the catalyst to a "remarkable shift," according to Burden. "The Chief Executive told me one day that BlackBerry had let him have his first proper holiday in years. It lets him take care of email when it suits him and is far less intrusive than receiving phone calls," says Burden.

"BlackBerry is perfect for our business," adds Taylor, summing up the situation. "It has sped up decision making and collaboration among managers and reduced the workload for IT—and all without disrupting Royal Mail's business."

"It's a marvellous piece of technology," concludes Burden.

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

BLACKBERRY CASE STUDY
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