SOTI®

Portable On Demand Storage (PODS) Case Study

Revolutionizing the Moving and Storage Industry Through the Power of Mobility

Industry Application Area:
Moving, Storage and Logistics

Network:
Sprint-Nextel IDEN (avg. 14.4 kbps)

Summary:
PODS
Mobile storage transportation company with over 230 million customers

Challenges
Emergency Remote Support, Device Updates, Malfunctioning Devices, User Training, and Data Storage Management

MobiControl Solution
Real-Time Remote Helpdesk & Support, Device Positioning, Zero End-User Intervention and Device Lockdown

Result
Efficient Remote Device Management, Automation of Device Processes, Time Savings and Reduced Human Error

About PODS

In 1998, PODS revolutionized the moving and storage industry by originating the concept of transporting mobile storage containers. The convenient, cost-effective service is unique in that the patented hydraulic lift system (only available with PODS) is designed to significantly reduce shift in contents while the PODS brand container is being loaded onto the truck for transport. The container is then securely transported locally, state to state or internationally.

Currently, the PODS network provides service to a population of over 230 million consumers and businesses in the US, Canada and Australia. To date, approximately one million reservations have been completed and there are over 130,000 PODS brand containers in service. PODS is available in 57 states and provinces and has performed approximately 150,000 long-distance relocations.

Usage Scenario

Portable On Demand Storage (PODS) has revolutionized the use of mobility in the moving and storage industry to offer residential and business customers a portable storage solution, providing greater convenience, security, decreased cost and shorter turn-around time. PODS delivers specialized moving containers to customers, stores the containers in a secure environment and delivers the containers on-demand.

The logistical challenge was formidable: coordinate what has since 1998 turned into over 130,000 containers, reserved over one million times across the US, Canada and Australia. PODS met the challenge by using SOTI Mobi-Control to track, support and manage over 1000 rugged mobile devices used by drivers and warehouse staff across 300 company owned and franchised locations.

At any point in time PODS knows exactly where every container is. Devices are preloaded with custom GPS tracking software and operate over the Sprint Nextel IDEN network. The solution incorporates bar code scanning, customer signature capture, and GPS technologies to tie containers to customers to precise location information. MobiControl plays a key role in keeping all the pieces of PODS' mobility solution functioning in real-time and in delivering the responsiveness that PODS customers have come to expect.

Problem Statement

Emergency Remote Support - One of PODS' foremost customer service priorities is to be highly responsive to customer requests. On every trip to customer locations drivers are guided by GPS enabled voice navigation to ensure the most efficient route and to eliminate wasted time searching for an address. Drivers are also provided with precise customer information to ensure authorized transfer of the containers to each customer. To prevent delays caused by malfunctioning devices, PODS required a remote helpdesk that could fix problems on the road, keeping the containers mobile and customers happy.

Taking Control of Ongoing Maintenance and Updates – PODS needed to regularly update over 1000 devices with software and settings with minimal end-user intervention. Their present system required end-users and location managers to cradle and ActiveSync

"Before MobiControl, our devices in the field were not always functioning as expected. We had no visibility over the problems experienced by the users – we were working blindly. With SOTI MobiControl, we were able to remote control into the devices and see in real-time what our users really needed. The added visibility enabled us to develop and deliver solutions to the mobile devices to improve the end user's experience. With MobiControl, we got the devices out quicker and solved problems faster."

-Tammy Carr,
VP of Corporate Training & Development (PODS)

all devices, which proved time consuming and error prone. Many users did not have the technical savvy to complete the updates or to understand the consequences of improperly updating a device. This resulted in malfunctioning devices and frustrated drivers, causing them to circumvent the system.

User Training and Buy-In - The average end-user had no experience using a rugged hand-held computer. In addition to the initial in-person training regimen, there was a need to ensure a "continuing education" program that could be delivered directly to the mobile device.

Data Storage Management - PODS needed to collect GPS tracking data for route analysis. However, to avoid quickly maxing out device storage, and potentially causing delays in container deliveries, PODS needed a method to regularly upload the data from devices to a central server and then purge the data from the device. All of this needed to be done without any action being taken by the end-user and without hindering device performance during business hours.

Improper Device Use - When left to their own "devices", many field-workers misused their mobile computers – surfing the internet, playing games, etc. PODS needed to eliminate misuse through restrictive measures. The goal was to maximize productivity among end-users and support personnel and to prevent device downtime and delays in service.

Technical Constraints - All of the above requirements needed to be met by a system that operates seamlessly over constrained network resources. PODS utilized the Sprint Nextel IDEN network, which has an average bandwidth of 14.4 kbps.

The Solution

SOTI MobiControl is an advanced mobile device Management, Support and Security solution. Using MobiControl, PODS increased the ease and speed of device deployment, now provides over-the-air support to end-users, provisions devices with data over low and unstable network connections, and has achieved full end-user and support personnel buy-in. Tools like remote help-desk, advanced security, over-the-air support, device provisioning, file synchronization, device lockdown and scripting keep devices and software working, which results in keeping trucks moving and customers satisfied.

Real-Time Remote Support Minimizes Down-

time - PODS helpdesk staff are able to establish remote control sessions with any of their devices in the field via MobiControl Help Desk tools. If a driver experiences technical difficulties accessing route information from their device while in transit, helpdesk personnel at the home office can remotely log into the device, see the screen of the device and remotely troubleshoot with the end-user or take full control to resolve the problem. This allows the driver to be on his way with minimal downtime.

Provisioning and Scripting Capabilities Enable an Efficient and Consistent Maintenance Process AND Accelerate End-User Training - Using MobiControl, PODS has centralized the device maintenance and upgrade process, achieving zero reliance on end-users to keep devices and software in working order. Devices are automatically and remotely provisioned at night to avoid service interruption. This brings significant time savings over the old manual process and reduces the element of human error.

PODS also delivers software training videos in compressed form to devices in the field. This innovative training method improves the end-user experience by providing better familiarity with onboard applications, and by reducing the amount of time drivers need to spend at the home office for training. A particular innovative use by PODS involves the use of MobiControl's advanced scripting capabilities to automatically launch the "video of the day" when the end-user opens the training application. MobiControl logs and reports this event and suppresses future automatic launching of that video to avoid end-user frustration.

Data Storage Management with Zero End-User Intervention - PODS needed to collect GPS tracking data stored on their devices every day without disrupting end-users. Using MobiControl, PODS was able to schedule a device 'wake-up' at midnight, wherein the MobiControl agent on the device automatically initiates a connection to the data network, uploads the files to the server and purges this data from the device once uploaded. This automated process saves time and helps avoid calls to the helpdesk to fix problems related to storage resources being drained.

Device Lockdown Gives PODS Full Control Over How Devices Are Used - MobiControl's lockdown feature allows PODS to place the device in a kiosk mode, preventing unnecessary and

unauthorized usage of the applications on the device. By doing so PODS has eliminated Internet browsing and downloads which historically contributed to a waste of worker's time, clogged up the device's storage and adversely affected the device's performance.

Constrained Network Resources - MobiControl allows efficient remote management of PODS' 1040 devices over the IDEN network despite low average network speeds of 14.4 kbps. SOTI's advanced compression and check pointing algorithms allow data to be delivered even over very slow and unstable connections, enabling PODS to provision their devices daily with the customer and location information necessary to keep the trucks moving.

Solution Benefits:

- OTA Provisioning and Scripting Capabilities enable efficient and consistent maintenance/update process and accelerate end-user training
- Remote Help-Desk tools keep device hardware and software working, which keeps trucks moving.
- Advanced compression and check pointing algorithms allow data to be delivered even over very slow and unstable connections
- Device lockdown functionality prevents unnecessary / unauthorized usage of the applications on the device.

About SOTI Inc.

SOTI is the world's most trusted provider of Enterprise Mobility Management (EMM) solutions, with over 14,000 enterprise customers and millions of devices managed worldwide. SOTI makes mobility work by developing industry-leading solutions for EMM, allowing organizations to support corporate-liable and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policies. SOTI MobiControl solves the unique challenges involved in managing, securing, supporting, and tracking mobile and desktop computing devices across all platforms.

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