



### Product Solution Delivered

Mobile-enabling its 200 engineers with a rugged wireless handheld PC has enabled Britvic to handle more service calls, increase employee efficiency, improve customer satisfaction and provide greater management information.

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## Case Study:

# Britvic

### SITUATION: Britvic - mobile field service solution

As the UK's second largest soft drinks manufacturer, Britvic Soft Drinks produces Britvic fruit juices and mixers, plus the Tango, Pepsi and Robinsons brands. Over 40,000 retail outlets such as pubs, restaurants and shopping centres use Britvic's vending and dispensing equipment - looked after by 200 field service engineers.

### PROBLEM: To increase productivity and improve customer service

Relying on pen, paper and mobile phone to manage their service calls, Britvic's 200 field service engineers each used to tackle around six jobs a day. Some 70 engineers also worked with obsolete handheld devices using data transmitted via their mobile phones. When these aging systems broke down, they couldn't be replaced.

Constant telephone communication between a Service Centre and the workforce was the key to maintaining customer service. Although the company used an IBM AS/400-based service management system, the information wasn't recorded in real-time. Customer enquiries could not be accurately answered and management information was often lacking.

Customer Systems Manager Lisa Heron says that an improved service was essential to grow the customer base and increase efficiency. Engineers needed to spend less time communicating and more time working while their managers required accurate information. New-generation handheld PCs seemed ideal but there were concerns about size, weight, keyboards and durability.

"Our field service project was all about increasing productivity and cutting costs. We wanted to help the engineers do an extra job a day by freeing some time," said Heron.

**AN ITRONIX SOLUTION:** There was a thorough evaluation into possible solutions for a mobile-enabled workforce. A group of engineers helped specify the requirements for a new mobile device including a versatile QWERTY keyboard and good-sized colour screen. The system had to be rugged, light enough to carry around easily, yet survive workplaces where liquid spills were commonplace.

Heron says that Itronix' expertise in military-standard rugged wireless computers proved the right answer. The Itronix fex21 handheld wireless PC was backed by flexible service and support options for system replacement within a day. A roll-out of the new systems started in Summer 2002 after software development by Microsoft Gold Certified Partner Conchango.

The handheld PC has been tightly integrated with Britvic's legacy service management system. Running under Microsoft Windows CE, new software applications cover field servicing, messaging, time sheets and GSM data communications. Thanks to an intuitive Windows environment, minimal user training was needed.

Job details are now transmitted automatically to the mobile workforce. Allocated by location and

workload, a job list is displayed on the engineer's handheld wireless PC. Using the pen or finger touch-sensitive screen, the engineer accepts the job and the system automatically notifies the Service Centre. Other key stages - arrival and work completion - are similarly reported for accurate engineer tracking.

The rugged system means that engineers have little to fear from liquid spillages or accidental drops while a long battery life easily covers the working day. Using a series of on-screen forms, the tasks are recorded by ticking a box, clicking a button, choosing a pull-down menu option or occasionally entering free-format text. Heron says minimal data entry ensures a high degree of accuracy.

"Extensive data validation is also helping to ensure better management information. For example, we're now able to look at fault trends."

If any parts need ordering, the engineer may browse a list before placing a telephone order. The system can even complete a weekly time sheet by automatically retrieving job data to cut down on time-consuming paperwork. To receive any new jobs, send short messages or make progress reports, the handheld PC periodically dials the Service Centre.

Thanks to the new investment in mobile technology, the company's engineers are not only handling an extra job a day but also reporting greater job satisfaction. Heron adds that the Itronix fex21 has been "extremely well received", proving much easier than paperwork and telephone thanks to efficient wireless communications. Customer service has notably improved with more accurate query answering.

Future plans will see scanner wands being added to the handheld PC to read printed bar codes on the vending and dispensing equipment while mobile spares orders is being considered too. The Itronix fex21 has also been used to check the company's £80 million equipment assets against its records. Customer Service Manager Lisa Heron says the £1.2 million project has a return on investment of around two years.

"Britvic is well on target to deliver that return. We were very thorough when evaluating rugged handheld wireless PCs and the Itronix fex21 has proved exactly the right solution for us. We've developed a strong relationship with Itronix as they're a good company to work with."