



Longspan Gutters delivers cost-effective communications to a mobile salesforce with BlackBerry solution

Longspan Gutters is a South African company that manufactures, distributes and installs seamless aluminium gutters and related products. It has offices in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg, and provides its services around the country using its mobile factory units. The company employs 60 people.

The Challenge

For a company the size of Longspan Gutters, the geography of South Africa presents a real challenge. The firm has a fleet of mobile factory units that enables it to provide installation services just about anywhere in the country. These units are self-sufficient trucks that move from one work site to another. They carry everything required to make and install gutters on a building.

For the sales teams, communications was another story. They too travelled extensively, but unlike the mobile units, they didn't have everything they needed to do their job. One vital tool was missing: convenient, reliable, cost-effective communications. So when Longspan Gutter's mobile contract came up for renewal, the company decided it was time to upgrade their mobile communications.

The Solution

Gus Behn, chief executive officer of Longspan Gutters, knew what he wanted. "I did my research prior to selecting a solution. I wanted push technology, centralised management of the devices and cost savings. The BlackBerry solution fit the bill on all three points."

Key Benefits

- Improved team communications
- Improved customer service
- Instant cost savings
- Centralised device management for peace of mind
- Future platform for mobile apps

“When you enter something on your BlackBerry smartphone and it automatically within seconds appears simultaneously on your desktop, that functionality is fantastic,” says Behn. “And knowing that in the event the handset is lost or stolen, you don’t lose all your contacts and appointments and the fact that you can neutralise the missing device is great.”

Longspan Gutters issued over a dozen BlackBerry® smartphones to its sales team. It also installed BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for Microsoft Exchange to manage the devices. As soon as the sales people started using the BlackBerry smartphones, Behn discovered another feature of the solution: BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™). “The team took to it right away,” he explains.

Today, Longspan Gutters uses email primarily with customers and suppliers, while BBM is “really to communicate with our staff,” adds Behn. “Quite often we won’t bother to phone our staff during the day and they won’t bother to call us, instead we will communicate via BBM.”

The Benefits

The switch to BBM as a core communications tool has helped Longspan Gutters save money on mobile calls and text messages. “The monthly fee for the BlackBerry® Internet Service is marginal compared to the savings we enjoy throughout the month,” says Behn.

It has also brought the sales team into the fold. “They can’t do without their BlackBerry smartphones. It’s become a very critical part of their day to day work,” says Behn. “When they are out seeing customers they may get an email from a customer wanting to accept a job or go ahead with an order. They can respond to it right away, whereas before they would have to do their work in the day and either come back to the office late that afternoon or the following day.”

Behn also credits the BlackBerry® solution with improving customer service. “BlackBerry smartphone enhances their mobility and allows them to spend more time with the customers. And because they can respond faster, we can close sales more quickly, which prevents the customer from going to the competition.”

Based on the success of the initial deployment, Longspan Gutters is now looking for new ways the BlackBerry solution can help improve its business. The firm is currently working with a software developer on an electronic form app for taking orders.

“It would be connected to our back office system and let the sales people generate a quotation and simultaneously email it to the customer, which would be a real time saver,” says Behn.



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Gus Behn
chief executive officer
Longspan Gutters

Industry:
Manufacturing & Logistics

Region:
South Africa

Company Size:
Medium

Solution:
BlackBerry® smartphones
BlackBerry® Enterprise Server
BlackBerry® Messenger (BBM™)