Case Study: Smithereen Pest Management Services

Samsung Galaxy Smartphones Improve Field Service Workflows and Productivity

Customer Need
Smithereen Pest Management Services needed to boost the productivity of their field technicians by streamlining workflows and providing a mobile, paperless office. The company needed a single device to handle multiple tasks like navigation, communications, service records, and inspection reporting. The device also needed to be affordable and withstand the rough conditions of field use.

Samsung Solution
The company outfitted their field technicians with Samsung Galaxy smartphones and an app from WorkWave, which enable field techs to manage their entire workflow with a single device. The Samsung smartphone is used for navigating to customer locations, recording chemicals used and work performed, communicating with central dispatch, and recording (photos or video) pest situations with customers and office.

Results
The Samsung Galaxy smartphones have helped streamline workflows and boost field tech productivity. Field technicians now have a mobile “virtual office” at their fingertips and no longer need to physically come to the office every day. They use the smartphone six to 10 times per service call and up to 120 times per day to stay connected and productive.
Smithereen Pest Management Services was founded in the late 1880s and is one of the oldest professional pest control companies in America. The Chicago-based company is led by the fourth-generation owner and continues to provide integrated pest management to residential and commercial customers in the Midwest.

The company has thrived well into its second century by constantly innovating and adopting new techniques and technologies. Smithereen was one of the first companies to implement IPM principles and offer Green Shield Certified service, a program that satisfies LEED® eligibility requirements and helps reduce pest control impact on the environment.

Pest control is a mature business, so staying competitive means continually improving staff productivity and customer satisfaction through technology.

“The field technicians who drive the trucks and deliver the service are the heart of our business,” says David Frederick, Service Technology Manager at Smithereen. “So we invested in practical technology that makes them successful on the road.”

The company adopted PestPac, a cloud-based pest control software solution from WorkWave. The PestPac software was initially accessed by technicians with a proprietary handheld computing device. But the device was expensive, bulky, and still required a separate mobile phone for communicating with customers and the home office.

Smithereen needed a versatile smartphone that could serve as a virtual office for field technicians and handle all workflow and communication tasks. The smartphone needed to be durable, reliable and easy to use.

“On average, service techs make 12-15 service calls a day and use PestPac throughout the day,” Jeet Badwal, Product Manager for PestPac. “Each service call typically involves 10 sessions with the software, so that’s 120-150 activity sessions with a device every single day, so it’s critical they have a reliable mobile device.”

The smartphone also needed to streamline customer communications and ensure accurate chemical usage records. “As a service company that lays down chemicals at different facilities, including state-monitored organizations such as schools, we must keep good records,” says Frederick.
After reviewing multiple options, Smithereen chose the Samsung Galaxy Grand Prime smartphones. The Grand Prime phones have a bright, HD display and a large 5” screen for visibility in almost any lighting condition.

With fast, reliable connectivity via Sprint’s 4G network, the Galaxy smartphone’s web, text, voice, GPS, and camera functionality enable technicians to carry a single device to execute most of their daily activities and workflows. “Our techs now have a single device that enables them to accomplish tasks that would have required multiple devices in the past,” says Frederick.

The 4G LTE data connectivity enables service technicians to connect to the PestPac mobile app. “They can complete a variety of tasks, from viewing the work order to documenting the chemicals used, to generating inspection reports,” says Badwal.

The high-quality voice calls and texting enable technicians to stay in close contact with customers and the home office. “We can now easily send text messages to our technicians with updated information,” says Frederick. “They are constantly connected to the office, which gives us greater flexibility with routes and plugging any open slots in the day.” The integrated communications also enable Smithereen to stay connected to customers and ensure they are updated on service appointments.

The Galaxy smartphone’s high-quality 8MP rear-facing camera with LED flash enables technicians to take photographs or videos in poorly lit attics, crawlspaces, and basements. The photos and images can be shown to customers for quick decisions on treatment options.

“Customers typically don’t like going into hot attics or dank basements to see live bugs,” says Frederick. “So our technicians can take a photo or video of the pest infestation and damage and show it to the customer and they can make quick decisions on treatment. And if the technician isn’t sure about the pest or the treatment option, he can share the images with the experts in the office or fellow techs in the field for real-time advice.”

Since the field technicians are on the road for most of the day, battery life is also critical. The Samsung Galaxy Grand Prime smartphones have up to 18 hours of talk time.

The Solution:
Galaxy Smartphones Drive Productivity

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The Results: Field Productivity and Better Customer Service

Since deploying the Samsung Galaxy smartphones, Frederick notes that productivity has increased and technicians are excited about using the smartphones. The dynamic functionality of the devices has enabled service techs to streamline workflows, and tasks are completed more efficiently.

“Our technicians were very excited about the Samsung smartphones from the start,” says Frederick. “Most of them have Samsung phones and TVs and know the brand, so we faced less resistance when rolling out the new device and the adoption process was seamless.”

The company is also pleased with the durability of the Samsung Galaxy smartphones, which is critical for field technicians who are working under harsh environmental and handling conditions.

PestPac, the leading pest control software with over 70 of the top 100 companies listed in Pest Control Technology Magazine, notes that there is an industry-wide transition from proprietary handheld devices to industry-standard smartphones, and Samsung devices are one of the top choices amongst their user base.

“Samsung devices account for over 30% of the top devices used by our customers,” says Mike Profit, VP of Product Management at WorkWave. “In a typical week, there are over 500,000 activity sessions on Samsung devices.”

Samsung smartphones are helping Smithereen migrate tasks to the mobile environment. “We’re really pleased with the positive results of using the Samsung Galaxy Grand Prime in the field,” says Frederick. “And we’re always looking at new ways to leverage the power of Samsung Galaxy smartphones in our business.”