



CASE STUDY

Morefield Communications

Reducing Costs and Payroll While Improving Customer Service

Overview

Country: United States

Industry: Communications

Scenario

- ◆ Manually routing service calls and coordinating dispatch was inefficient and labor-intensive
- ◆ Rising gas costs were a constant threat to profitability
- ◆ Consistently behind in getting invoices to customers
- ◆ Report requests had to be scheduled and run by IT Staff

Solution

The company moved from an internally built system to WennSoft Job Cost, Service Management Series and Microsoft Dynamics® GP complete business solutions

Improvements

- ◆ Dispatching made more efficient
- ◆ Enhanced service call management
- ◆ Faster invoicing
- ◆ Better reporting

Business Impact:

- ◆ 50% of service calls resolved remotely
- ◆ Shortened invoicing time from 6 months to 2 weeks
- ◆ Fuel expenditures remained constant as gas prices surged
- ◆ Reduced service call mileage by 20,213 miles
- ◆ Fewer technicians required to resolve the same number of service calls
- ◆ Improved service calls per FTE ratio by 16%

About Morefield Communications

Morefield Communications designs, installs, and services communication technologies in Pennsylvania and Maryland. Since 1945, they've partnered with business and community organizations to create effective solutions that last. They approach their client's communications needs as a partner, not a vendor. Through effective partnering, Morefield offers solutions and relationships that last.

Problems with an Internally Developed Software System

For 21 years, Morefield Communications was using an internally developed software system that ran on an HP 9000, and provided a green-screen user interface. The system was complicated to learn, requiring the user to memorize lots of codes. While it allowed staff to efficiently enter jobs and equipment information, there was no tie to a general ledger (GL), so it had to be managed manually by the CFO.

"In the old system, our CFO was the company's GL," said Jim Stewart, Morefield Communications' CIO. "The CFO took all the data from the old system and moved it manually into the GL."

Stewart helped Morefield transition to a new, more effective software solution. The company chose WennSoft Job Cost and Service Management Series. Job Cost and Service Management Series integrate a complete project management solution with the superior financial management capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics® GP. WennSoft Job Cost gives companies the ability to utilize job data and proactively manage labor, materials, and other user-defined categories. WennSoft Service Management Series helps asset-based organizations effectively manage complex customer relationships.

Managing Service Calls More Efficiently

A problem with their old system was that it required all service calls to be handled manually. Calls came in to a coordinator, who would enter a job into the system. A job ticket would print on a printer in a small technical assistance center (TAC) where it would be reviewed and worked. If the job had to be dispatched, the TAC would take the ticket back to the coordinator. The coordinator would look at one of three clipboards that listed the technician's schedules for the three geographic areas they served. After identifying an available technician, they contacted the technician, assigned them the job, and updated the appropriate clipboard.

"It was a time consuming and inefficient process," said Stewart.

With the WennSoft solution, Morefield no longer needs a coordinator to manage all the job calls; instead they've created a solution that works like a modern call center.

"WennSoft has really improved the way we route calls," said Stewart. "There's a world of difference between our old way and the new way we handle service calls."

All Morefield's service calls now come directly to TAC. The call is answered, entered and in many cases resolved by the person who takes the call. If the 1st level TAC technician cannot resolve the issue they have the option of assigning the call to a second level subject matter expert or dispatching the call from their session.

WennSoft has also improved Morefield's efficiency in technician dispatch. Rather than just looking at availability, the TAC technician can determine which service technicians have the skill set and parts required for the repair on their truck. This saves time and money by eliminating unscheduled trips for parts.

"In addition to greatly improving our customer service, WennSoft reduces our administrative costs because we don't have someone take the call, enter the information and tell the customer that someone will call them back to help," said Stewart.

Repairing Systems Remotely

Morefield's goal is to resolve every service call over the phone. WennSoft has helped them to service more than 50% of their calls remotely.

"WennSoft puts essential information at the fingertips of our field staff. This has reduced the number of trucks we roll to jobs," said Stewart. "I can't emphasize enough how much of a difference it has made to give our technicians access to customer information while they are on the road or working from home offices."

Morefield's technicians all have laptops and air cards so they can access WennSoft to look up the information on the job, get specifics on the equipment and obtain network diagrams. They are also able to access the customer's systems allowing them to repair issues remotely, whenever possible.

Managing Significant Rise in Gas Prices

Increasing the number of service calls they resolve remotely has reduced the company's expenditures. Every time they have to send a technician to a location for a repair, it costs the company money. While customers pay a trip charge for repair calls, these fees don't cover all the related costs. For instance Morefield isn't able to get fully reimbursed for the lost productivity involved during the time it takes a technician to get to the job, which sometimes can be up to an hour and a half away. Other costs include maintenance costs for the trucks, and of course gas.

"We've been able to keep our fuel expenditures constant as gas prices went from \$2.50 a gallon to \$4.00 a gallon because the number of miles we were driving has been reduced," said Stewart. "This allowed us to absorb a huge increase in gas prices."

Servicing calls remotely saves the company money, which enables Morefield to pass those savings on to their customers.

"It saves our customers money when we don't roll a truck. It's a less expensive way to fix their problem. That improves our customer service and gives us a competitive edge," said Stewart.

Another benefit of being able to service calls remotely is that it has improved Morefield's productivity. This has helped Morefield reduce its payroll because the company needs fewer technicians to service the same amount of customers.

About WennSoft

WennSoft, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, provides innovative business management solutions for public and private sector organizations focused on project management, field service and equipment/fleet management.

WennSoft services include assessment, training, implementation and go-live support. With more than a decade of experience in delivering superior applications in the field service and construction industries, WennSoft is the solution provider of choice.

“One technician working from a home office or TAC, with the ability to dial into different systems and having access to customer records can service a lot more calls if he doesn’t have to drive to each location,” said Stewart.

Better Reporting

In the old system, if anyone wanted to get information out of the system, the company had to have a programmer write something and put it into a spreadsheet. With WennSoft, they have Smartlists for a lot of the operational day-to-day activities. They have also created report sites using Microsoft SQL® Reporting Services where staff and management can run reports on everything from Chargeable Time to tracking inventory and determining profitability.

“It’s amazing some of the reports we have and we can build them very quickly,” said Stewart.

Faster Invoicing

WennSoft has helped Morefield reduce the time to it takes to get invoices to customers. It used to take them up to 6 months to finalize costs on some jobs and get invoices out. Now they do it within 2 weeks; the only hold up is time entry and approval.

With the old system, the process of billing was manual and extremely time consuming. With WennSoft the invoicing is automated, which simplifies the process. This has helped them reduce the number of cost disputes the company has experienced.

“If your billing is really behind it causes customers to question the invoices because they can’t remember the work that was completed,” said Stewart. “Our billing and collection process are much more timely. It’s been great.”

