



CASE STUDY OLD DOMINION FREIGHT LINE



Old Dominion Freight Line, Inc. (ODFL) is a less-than-truckload multi-regional carrier providing 1-to-5 day service among 5 regions in the U.S. and next-day and 2nd day service within these regions. ODFL offers an array of innovative products and services that provide direct service to 44 states within the Southeast, South Central, Northeast, Midwest and West regions, including 32 states within which it provides full-state coverage.

ODFL has recently updated their mobile delivery solutions, including CDMA capable mobile handheld devices and next generation delivery applications. These solutions use both voice and data network features within a single mobile handheld device. The devices utilize both 802.11 WLAN and WWAN on both Cingular (GSM/GPRS) and Verizon (1xRTT) networks.

This new delivery application was required because ODFL was experiencing coverage issues due to its expanding geography and limited proprietary data network. ODFL needed to rapidly build and deploy a new solution in order to keep their driver and delivery network operating efficiently. ODFL is deploying 3,000 handheld devices to drivers in the initial phase and expects to increase with the growth rate the company is experiencing.

ODFL drivers use the application during pick-up and delivery for “less than truck load” customers. ODFL transmits an optimized route plan, to each driver, for daily pick-up and delivery schedules. It also allows the driver to make decisions on the route to accommodate any changes that arise. The solution also provides for real-time two-way communications between the driver and corporate and regional offices. This allows for updates to their route status and to accommodate any additional demands (new pick-up or delivery changes) that arise during the day. Corporate can also keep track of where in the route the driver is located. This allows for status updates to customers in real-time through ODFL.com, EDI, email, or any customer service application.

The new devices are the MC9000 family of rugged handhelds from Symbol Technologies, Inc., and are based on Microsoft’s Windows Mobile operating system. All devices were equipped with 802.11 WLAN (for in-depot communications) and either GSM/GPRS or 1xRTT CDMA. 1xRTT was selected because of its data bandwidth and nation-wide coverage.

Odyssey Software, Inc.’s products were used to build, deploy and manage ODFL’s communication layer for the application. ViaXML2™ was used for seamless integration with existing backend systems, queued store and forward web services allowing application availability even when the connection is lost, guaranteed one-time delivery of transactions, the ability to use multiple WWAN carriers with same application, and for the push of updated route information to the drivers while in the field.

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The combination of Odyssey's Athena™ and Symbol's MSP allows for software distribution and the collection and reporting of statistical information regarding the device and components. It enables help desk personnel to remotely control, diagnose and take corrective action when any issue occurs with a driver.

Odyssey's NetManager™ is being used for connection and battery management. Connection management allows ODFL choose which connection to establish: in-depot WLAN or WWAN. This allows for the choice of the least expensive connection (least cost routing). NetManager™ also allows ODFL to persist a connection and reduces battery drain.

This solution hits on many of the emerging requirements for an enterprise-scale, wide-area wireless line of business application. The solution is always available even when the connection is not. Most important, the technology behind this solution is transparent to ODFL's drivers. The queued web services (ViaXML) allow the application to always be available. If a connection is dropped the driver would not be affected and the transactions would be submitted and confirmed once the connection was restored.