

pocket2web adopted by eXPD8 and major high street retail chain clients



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Peter Bailey : eXPD8 director

About the Company

- Zync Solutions is a UK application service provider specialising in providing integrated mobile data solutions both on and off-line. The company also provides other services ranging from one-off consultancy appointments to designing, building and hosting bespoke systems to specific requirements.

Business Challenge

- Zync Solutions identified the need for an off-the-shelf, fixed price remote data capture application to enable field-based operatives to deliver and receive information in realtime regardless of their location.

Results

- Ability to electronically collect, collate and report data gathered from remote terminals
- Ability to input data from paper via a Web browser
- Ability to access time-critical information from disparate sources faster and more accurately
- Reduced time and costs associated with back-end administration
- Reduced data turnaround time and accuracy

- Improved inventory tracking and reporting
- Improved efficiency of field teams.

Industry

- Retail
- FMCG

System Configuration

pocket 2 Web offers an innovative combination of products comprising:

- Ambersync
- Any PocketPC-based device
- Inventory scanners from Socket
- Any Bluetooth-enabled cellular phones or PocketPC device with integrated mobile phone.

All industries with field-based operatives face the same challenge – cost-effective, fast, efficient remote data capture. Leading integrated mobile data solutions provider, Zync Solutions, has addressed this issue with pocket 2 web® – an innovative, off-the-shelf remote data collection application designed to capture data directly from a PDA or via paper to an online form. pocket 2 web uses the latest handheld devices and Internet technologies.

With high profile customers including T-Mobile (UK), 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment International, Disney, and Red Bull, Zync Solutions is a company with an unrivalled understanding of the issues facing companies operating in the mobilised data collection industries: process inefficiencies and spiralling costs due to time-consuming, paper-based reporting and stock management procedures.

Initially offering hosted and managed bespoke mobile data collection solutions, the company employed wireless technology through PDAs and Bluetooth-enabled mobile phones. This enabled users to capture and record data and digital images in the field, carry out realtime reporting, and complete data synchronisation via the Internet.

However, in response to client demands and requirements, Zync Solutions recently recognised the need to also provide an off-the-shelf, fixed price hosted data capture application. Industry-leading data collection application pocket 2 web was the result.

eXPD8 operates professional and dedicated field-based merchandising teams on behalf of well-known brands and retailers throughout the UK including Asda, Sainsbury's, Wilkinsons, Coop, Somerfield and Tesco. Data is captured for clients including EUK, Parragon Books, Wrigleys, Wanadoo, PepsiCo, and P&G.

eXPD8 combines a wealth of practical retail experience with a genuine commitment to service excellence, making the company a demanding customer when searching for a mobile workforce solution. Peter Bailey, Finance and IT Director, eXPD8, explained: "eXPD8 realises that 'retail is detail'. It's also what our customers demand. This process

and detail driven approach made finding a mobile workforce solution difficult. pocket 2 web was the only suitable match."

By using the latest handheld devices and Internet technologies, pocket 2 web can deliver, or receive, information from field-based operatives located almost anywhere in the world in realtime. Operatives can be based locally and/ or globally – in fact, wherever an internet connection can be made.

PDA-based data capture enables field staff to fill in forms once - electronically. The PDA then automatically checks all data for validity and completeness at the time of capture. At the end of the call, the user then synchronises the information to pocket 2 web for immediate processing. Paper-based data capture enables questionnaires to be printed directly from the system and filled in during a call. Users then enter the data via a browser on a form that exactly matches the printed sheet. All data is then automatically checked for validity and completeness.

pocket 2 web provides realtime visibility of actual product availability, enabling a quick response and replenishment if necessary and improving the speed and accuracy of stores' stock-on-hand data within inventory management systems. It also identifies non-compliance issues, enabling stores to prevent lost sales during profitable selling periods.

Using Ambersync, data, digital images and reports are synchronised from PDAs in the field direct to the Zync Solutions hosted Website. This information is then immediately available for viewing by authorised users along the supply chain, helping companies realise significant back office efficiencies in inventory and returns management, and product and display distribution, and streamlining partner relationships with retailers, distributors, and shipping companies.

However, the business benefits don't stop there. pocket 2 web also offers many more vital functions as Bailey enthused: "As well as data collection and reporting, users can also carry out their day-to-day back office business functions such as completing and submitting timesheets and expenses. Managers have an extra application allowing them to remotely

move and add calls and authorise expenses and timesheets."

Zync Solutions, has also developed several other 'bolt-on' applications for eXPD8, including the ability to capture images and signatures in store, and the use of barcode scanning to record stock counts. "Our next area of development will be staff assessment. Effective remote management of staff is vital in the industry – but notoriously difficult to implement. However, we are currently developing an application to make this possible with Zync Solutions," said Bailey.

"eXPD8 fully understands the seemingly impossible demands and timescales of the FMCG arena and recognises that we must be responsive to the demand that places on our customers. pocket 2 web places us firmly ahead of our competitors by making the mobile workforce even more mobile. The application continues to lead the way in the FMCG industry," Bailey added. "Staying ahead of the competition is everything in our fast-moving industry. With technology developing so rapidly we rely on having solution partners that not only keep up with changes, but pre-empt them."

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