



Case Study

Company: J&D Associates is a division of United Fixtures Company and a leader in motorized storage systems, industrial shelving and retail lighting. Retail Services Solutions is the new service side of the business.

Industry: Retail/Wholesale

Region: Americas

Company Size: Small-Medium Business - 95 employees

Type of Solution: Inventory and Supply Chain Management (ERP)

BlackBerry Partner Solution: Flowfinity Forms from Flowfinity Wireless Inc.

Challenge:

Launch Retail Service Solutions, a new arm of the business, with a work order and customer audit system that is as paperless as possible.

Solution:

Install the BlackBerry® Enterprise Solution, with Flowfinity Forms, to reduce paperwork and allow field technicians to remain mobile, while keeping information steadily flowing back to the company.

Results:

- Cuts down on paperwork
- Makes it faster to audit stores
- Quicker customer billing





Challenge

J&D Associates operates a multi-faceted business that sells shelving, lighting and display equipment to retail outlets along the U.S. eastern seaboard. They recently launched Retail Service Solutions, a new aspect of their business, which offers technical support for the lighting equipment they sell.

From the start, J&D Associates knew their service business had to be as paperless as possible. With technicians moving between customer locations, working out of vans and hotels every week, they didn't want to try and manage service calls by fax or phone.

They needed a solution that was portable, easy to use and would make it simple to send data collected from the field back to the company.

Solution

J&D Associates installed the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution for their Retail Services Solution business. They immediately knew it was the right decision.

They decided to go with the BlackBerry solution because they felt the solution was cost-effective and suited to their needs. They had looked at some other handheld devices but Melody Schlenker, IT Manager, felt, "there were too many bells and whistles. Our business model was fairly simple, it's a start-up, and e-mail was a major component."

"We didn't want to be saddled with a major support headache in terms of management or doing training with our technicians in far

flung corners of the U.S.," says Schlenker. "BlackBerry devices are intuitive and menu-driven, with one of the easiest user interfaces."

A Solution that Eliminates Paper. Dispatching technicians to various locations could have been a paperwork nightmare. But when the call center receives a request for service, they immediately key the request into their ERP system, called FS Plus. The ERP system generates a work order that is automatically sent by email to the technician's BlackBerry device. When a technician finishes a job, and closes it out on the BlackBerry device, the back office is simultaneously notified by email and starts the invoicing process.

"The key component is that this is paperless," says Schlenker. "We don't have technicians printing out paper, running to find fax machines or placing an inordinate number of phone calls to our dispatchers. With BlackBerry devices, we can manage the process seamlessly and that allows us to service the entire eastern seaboard with only seven crews."

Helps Manage Inventory Better. Retail Service Solutions uses Flowfinity Forms to perform audits of their customer locations. A technician's job is made easier because the electronic form they work from on the BlackBerry device is already filled in with much of the information they'll need, so they don't have to retype it. For example, the customer's billing address and the work requested are included on the form as soon as they receive it.

Since J & D Associates were doing all the integration in-house, simplicity was their number one concern. They already had the back end FS Plus system built. But they didn't want to have to hire numerous IT assistants to get their wireless solution working. "What appealed to us was we could deploy our own application

without having to be programmers," says Schlenker. "It was fairly easy to create forms and customize forms, so it was a nice fit."

Technicians input the type of lighting systems a customer has directly into the BlackBerry device onto pre-built Flowfinity Forms. Once the information is inputted, it is sent over-the-air to the back end system to assist with inventory management.

"Because a technician is taking inventory of what types of lighting a customer has, we can customize our inventory to ensure we carry the right lamps in the right quantities," says Schlenker. "That helps separate us from our competition because we show how we have all of the inventory available to service them in a timely fashion."

Speeds Up Billing Cycle. Because work orders are opened and closed by sending emails, the company has an up-to-the-minute status check on their work orders. When a job is closed out, the company can initiate the customer billing process at once, instead of having to wait until the end of the week or the end of the month; just one more advantage of having a paperless, wireless system.

"Having the information available to us the day the work is performed, as opposed to a batch of paperwork at the week's end, is hugely valuable," says Schlenker. "We can invoice 50% faster than we would have been able to do with paper, and it's easy to track jobs, if something temporarily gets lost in the system."



Partner Profile

Application Type: Inventory and Supply Chain Management (ERP)

Company: Flowfinity Wireless Inc.

- Provides out-of-the-box applications that can be easily custom tailored to the needs of any business
- Flowfinity improves the productivity of mobile workers while also providing managers with timely insight into field operations
- Has a growing base of customers in North America, Europe and Australia

Featured Product: Flowfinity Forms

Business Value:

"We entered into this process looking for a technology that would make us as paperless and agile as possible to close down the billing cycle as much as we could, and Flowfinity Forms made it easy for us and played right into our business model."

Melody Schlenker

IT Manager | J&D Associates

For more information, visit www.flowfinity.com

Results

Cuts Down on Paperwork: BlackBerry devices allow technicians to work from the road, without ever having to come into an office to drop off or pick up paperwork. IT managers can deploy devices and train users over-the-air, which cuts down on workload.

Makes it Faster to Audit Stores: Using Flowfinity Forms on the BlackBerry devices, technicians can audit a customer's store to help them keep their inventory accurately stocked; an approach that impresses their customers and keeps Retail Service Solutions leading in the marketplace.

Quicker Customer Billing: Timely billing is important to a small business. Retail Service Solutions gets information about completed work orders as they happen, to help them bill customers 50% faster and increase revenue flow.

"We decided to go with BlackBerry devices because they're cost-effective. What appealed to us was that we could deploy our own application without having to be programmers."

Melody Schlenker

IT Manager | J&D Associates

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For additional BlackBerry customer success stories visit, www.blackberry.com/go/success

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