Brand Case Study
Transco

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Transco keeps Mobile Workforce connected with Mobile Data

The Utility sector is one of the most open and competitive markets in the world. It has come a long way in the past decade or so since the utilities were privatized. Energy and Utilities are being transformed by the combined challenges of competition, consolidation, cost reduction and the creation of new revenue streams.

New technologies such as Seamless Roaming, and new applications of existing technologies, such as GPRS, are being used in the search for operational efficiency to achieve mobile data from any location. New standards such as WiFi will facilitate access to and the sharing of data for employees anywhere. Mobile Computing is increasingly being adopted and is displaying substantial savings in project timescales and costs.

Transco, Britain's leading gas transporter, is part of the National Grid Transco Plc and are responsible for ensuring that gas is delivered to more than 20 million homes and businesses around Britain safely and efficiently. A element in achieving this is the work of its field service teams that attend gas emergencies, and carries out installation and essential maintenance work.

Transco, have selected and installed the Brand Apollo 'Anywhere' solution into its corporate network. Providing over 10,000 remote employees in two projects with fast and reliable access to mission critical applications such as 'dynamic job despatch' and in the near future to other back office applications using GPRS.

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Transco's Mobile Workforce plays an essential role in the running of the business, attending to gas emergencies and critical situations on a daily basis. Transco needed a solution, which would allow then to use 'dynamic job despatch' to their regular and emergency field-based workers and other mission critical applications.

In 2001, Transco took the decision to replace their existing Private Mobile Radio (PMR) with GPRS. This meant that they could reach their engineers with information at any point during the day, allowing great flexibility and fewer restrictions than with the PMR system.

With the adoption of GPRS in 2001, Transco encountered many obstacles and enlisted Brand Communications to help solve them. Brand Apollo 'Anywhere' software allows Transco's mobile users to maintain true 'always-on' reliable access to applications in real time. Brand makes this possible by transparently integrating the LAN environment with wireless WAN

environments, enabling seamless roaming across GPRS and GSM (switched circuit) networks.

Brand offered Transco all the benefits of business access computing on multiple wireless network standards - with the added benefit of high compression levels, fast packet loss recovery and dynamic switching between 802.11b, GPRS or other bearer networks depending on availability during the same transaction.

Another key factor for consideration by Transco was security. With Brand's enhanced security techniques, it ensured that only valid users could establish sessions and access applications throughout the day.

The Brand solution also offered Transco additional capabilities including an effective customer care, support and marketing information interface for showing real time the activity on the network. It also has an inbuilt GPS interface that is ideal for utility and emergency service applications and this can also be used for positioning

using cell location given the visible cell information availability at the client terminal.

"Transco's mobile users were increasingly needing to access critical data and services in a variety of locations and environments" said Martin Evans, PMR Replacement Delivery Manager at Transco. "We selected Brand Communications because we felt their technology offered us so many different capabilities and helped our engineers to obtain a reliable, seamless and usable mobile connection at anytime in anyplace."

Brand's Apollo 'Anywhere' solution makes mobile data a reality for business-critical data applications using Session Management. It removes the uncertainty of using the wireless network to transfer vital information and ensures compatibility with almost all data devices and networks resulting in a future proofed investment for Transco, allowing access to all IP based applications from the office, home or in the field.

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