

Handheld-based asset tracking system helps Verizon cut process time by 75% and error rate from 30% to virtually zero

Palm Powered™ barcode scanners with built-in error checking are improving the accuracy of Verizon's central office property records databases. The easy-to-use handhelds have boosted compliance with mission-critical corporate procedures and produced a host of other measurable improvements.

About Verizon

Verizon, formed by the merger of Bell Atlantic and GTE, is the largest U.S. telecom carrier, providing over 33 million households with local and/or long-distance wireline services and 26 million customers with wireless connectivity. A Fortune 10 company, Verizon employs a quarter of a million people and does business in 40 countries around the globe.

Solution Highlights

- Near 100% reduction in data input errors (average 30% error rate reduced to virtually zero)
- 75% reduction in equipment audit time
- 45% reduction in overall barcode scanning costs
- Palm Powered™ Symbol SPT 1740 handhelds with built-in scanners and browser-like graphical user interfaces
- ScoutSync server software from Aether Technologies for synchronization of data between handhelds and corporate databases
- Palm OS® emulation software for rapid training in rollout to thousands of users

"We have seen a very positive impact on user compliance with asset barcoding procedures as a result of this implementation." –Todd Williams, Staff Administrator, Network Services

The Challenge

To provide reliable telecom services, Verizon must efficiently manage the equipment at its central office (CO) switching stations, where customer lines are terminated and interconnected. The job depends on comprehensive property records databases detailing exactly what equipment is installed or in inventory, being replaced or repaired.

To ensure database accuracy, thousands of Verizon workers in a variety of internal organizations—CO installation, technical support, maintenance, inventory management—must input data in a consistent manner. The company's barcode scanners, however, weren't convenient or easy to use, and they performed no error checking. Workers didn't always use the devices, and when they did, errors averaged 30%. Verizon needed a solution that would make it simple to do the right thing.

The Palm Handheld Solution

Verizon workers now use Palm Powered™ Symbol SPT 1700 handhelds to scan the barcodes of equipment as it is inventoried, installed, moved or removed from central office locations. At the end of each day, handheld data is synchronized with Verizon's centralized databases via a dial-up connection using ScoutSync server software from Aether Technologies.

Compliance with barcode scanning procedures is at an all-time high, and the information going into company databases is now virtually error free. Validation tables stored on the handhelds automatically check data as it is entered. In addition, graphical displays and drop-down menus make data input easier and faster. Equipment audits that used to take three to four hours now take 30 to 45 minutes.

The new asset tracking solution, developed by Hayton Systems, costs Verizon 45% less than its previous system. Currently being used by more than 2,500 employees, it will be rolled out to another 5,500 users in 2001, and another 10,000 within the next two years.