

Spirit, SOTI and Getac join forces to streamline Winterhalter's field operations

Leading warewashing supplier, Winterhalter, has deployed a new mobile enterprise solution developed by Spirit Data Capture Limited, working in close collaboration with Getac and SOTI. The three companies produced a highly effective solution involving Getac VII0s and SOTI's MobiControl.

These have saved a significant amount of time and trouble and have also ensured that Winterhalter can control and manage its entire mobile estate quickly and efficiently.

Winterhalter has been operating in the UK since 1971 and is headquartered in Southern Germany. The Bavarian engineering that goes into its products makes it a leading force in commercial glass and dishwashing for the foodservice industry. Winterhalter is the only company that manufactures warewashing equipment and chemicals as well as providing service and water treatment. Its clientele include a host of pubs, restaurants, hotels and supermarkets; hospitals, universities and prisons; and specialist caterers in sports stadia, conference centres and music venues.

winterhalter®

Defining the issue

The firm's UK operations are underpinned by its nationwide network of technicians. To streamline its repair and maintenance activities, the company recently decided to update its existing system, which used Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) whose screens were too small for viewing manuals and wiring diagrams. The software also crashed repeatedly due to limited processing power.

The device problems meant a considerable loss of time, and users had to revert to paperwork as a back-up option, which also increased pressure on the office personnel. The company therefore upgraded its software and started looking for more effective and powerful handheld devices that could increase the efficiency and productivity of its servicing operations in the field.

As the parent company in Germany uses Getac equipment, Winterhalter asked Getac for its advice. Getac is a leading provider of rugged computers, including laptops, tablets and mobile computers. The company serves a wide array of market sectors, from defence, utilities and oil and gas through to telecoms, transportation and manufacturing.

Neil Tolchard, Winterhalter's IT Manager, explains: "We wanted handheld devices that would be very rugged and that used a Windows operating system. To save time, we also wanted to be able to transmit details about new and completed jobs over Wifi and from SIM cards within seconds."

Developing the solution

In response, Getac recommended its Getac V110. This is a very light but fully rugged convertible tablet that runs on Windows and has an IP64 rating. It has a large, 11.6" multi-touch display that uses LumiBond technology; a 5 megapixel auto-focus camera; a webcam; and dual hot-swappable batteries that provide a continuous power supply in the field. The V110 offers a full range of connectivity options, including GPS, 4G/LTE and Bluetooth.



Getac also recommended Spirit Data Capture, an independent company specialising in mobile enterprise solutions, to configure and install the devices. Spirit's team, headed by Technical Director Geoff Littler, worked closely with Getac in the discussions with Winterhalter, and the company subsequently purchased 110 Getac V110s.

Winterhalter realised that it also needed a central way of managing its Android mobile phones, so Spirit suggested using SOTI's MobiControl software. SOTI is an innovative developer of mobile technology solutions. Its flagship product is MobiControl, the UK's leading enterprise mobility management (EMM) software solution. Over 17,000 customers across 170 countries rely on MobiControl and SOTI for their EMM needs.

Winterhalter bought MobiControl licences to manage its extensive estate of iPads and iPhones. MobiControl was also used to ensure that the company's devices are compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Neil comments: "Many of our customers want us to update jobs on their system as well as ours. With MobiControl, we can remotely deploy and update apps to all users within minutes."

Reaping the rewards

He adds: "We're already seeing the benefits of the new system. Our technicians can go to a site; carry out all of their survey work; and then use the Getac device to send off the notes to our main system over WiFi or 4G. The V110s save a considerable amount of time by cutting down on an awful lot of paperwork. They also enable us to do invoicing more rapidly, which improves our cash flow.

"The Getac devices are much more reliable than our old PDAs. Some 99% of calls are now closed on a Getac, saving time in the office that would have been spent manually closing calls – and our technicians spend less time rebooting devices. With the large touch screen, the technicians can easily see documents such as wiring diagrams and manuals. The whole system is much more flexible and upgrades can also be carried out more easily."

Neil continues: "In terms of MobiControl, the key benefit is the time saved in the deployment, provisioning and support of our devices. It has proved invaluable for managing the devices and for providing complete traceability. We can also use the software to monitor SIM card data remotely. As a result, if a tablet, smartphone or notepad is nearing its data limit, an alert will be sent to the device to warn that it's coming towards the end of its allowance."

He concludes: "We're very happy with the new system. Working with Spirit, Getac and SOTI has been a great experience. I'm particularly grateful to Spirit for the professional way in which they've co-ordinated the whole project and quickly sorted out any issues. Winterhalter is continuing to grow, and we hope to have a total of about 200 technicians on the road in the next year or so. We'll therefore be making further use of Spirit's expertise, Getac's devices and SOTI's MobiControl software."