

CASE STUDY



Accurate Heating, Inc.

Saved 25% a month in fuel and increased revenue \$58,000 a year.

It's not often that a customer sends a love letter to a service provider, but Kim Williams did just that. It wasn't a hastily dashed off email either, but a lengthy and enthusiastic missive on company letterhead, volunteering to become a reference. "Please add us to your reference list," she wrote. "We would be happy to speak to your future customers."

Williams is the service manager at Accurate Heating, Inc. (AHI), a bustling, full-service commercial and industrial HVAC contractor in Wilsonville, Oregon. Despite the economic downturn, business is booming at AHI, and she has her hands full running the office and supervising 15 mobile service technicians. But busy as she is, things are going smoothly these days, now that she and her staff have the right tools

Challenges.

For Williams, managing her field staff used to be like herding cats. The technicians were virtually impossible to keep track of, and nearly as hard to communicate with. If they didn't answer their mobile phones (which they often didn't), or were out of range, Williams had to leave voice mail instructions for their next job, and with verbal instructions, miscommunications were common. Furthermore, between service calls, technicians often seemed to drop off the map.

Fuel expenses were also an issue. Field technicians were dependent on outdated paper maps, which wasted time and fuel between jobs. And since Williams didn't know where exactly her workers were much of the time, there was no way of knowing how efficiently they were managing their time, or whether they were taking recreational side trips.

Then there was the hour and a half that the technicians spent in the office every Friday catching up on paperwork. "My guys are billable at \$84 an hour," she says, "and we were losing money paying them to sit there and do paperwork. I'd much rather have them out on billable jobs."

Solution.

Williams decided to upgrade AHI's mobile phones, hoping to gain better coverage and a workable location tracking system. She checked with her current provider and a few other vendors. The Verizon Wireless business specialist's understanding of her company's needs greatly impressed her, as did the services and devices he presented.

Williams switched over to Verizon Wireless and purchased a fleet of rugged and user-friendly Motorola Adventure™ V750 phones, with Mobile Email, Mobile Web, Mobile IM, and chat capabilities. But the frosting on the cake is Field Force Manager, which shows the location and location history of her workers, provides location information when they clock in and out and when they accept and complete jobs, creates an audit trail to validate job information, and generates turn-by-turn driving directions via Verizon Wireless Location Based Services (LBS). Williams can also automatically dispatch jobs, track job progress, and capture timecard information with the system.

ACCURATE HEATING, INC.

Company description:

Accurate Heating, Inc. (AHI), located in Wilsonville, Oregon, is a full-service commercial and industrial HVAC contractor. AHI has 15 full-time technicians and four office staff, and has been in business for 14 years. Total revenue for 2008 was around \$6 million dollars.

Challenges:

AHI needed to:

- Track the location and activities of service technicians.
- Find a better navigation system.
- Cut down on fuel bills.
- Improve communication between service manager and technicians.



Williams was pleased to find a solution that offered both location tracking and fleet management in one convenient package. "For me to be able to send my technicians directions with the simple push of a button is amazing. And now I know where they are at all times—and they know I know. Plus, I can send them all the information they need to complete jobs; everything they need is right there on the screen."

Field Force Manager has also eliminated the need for the Friday paperwork catch-up in the AHI office. "With the ability to send them work orders, job numbers, and other pertinent information while they're out in the field, there's no need for weekly meetings," says Williams.

Results.

In the first month after adopting Field Force Manager, AHI's fuel bill dropped from over \$6,000 to \$4,515, a realized savings of 25%. "The gas savings in a single month pays for the cost of the phones and then some," says Williams.

Productivity has radically increased, too. "Field Force Manager put an immediate stop to my workers going missing," Williams says. "Now, when I send the guys out on service or maintenance calls, instead of getting one or two done, they're doing three or four. I think they're paying closer attention to what they're doing because they know I'm paying closer attention."

AHI is also looking at increased revenue of nearly \$58,000 per year by doing away with the paperwork gatherings, and that's not counting the additional billable hours the company is seeing now that the technicians are spending that time on additional service or maintenance. And Williams has more time to get her own job done.

Williams was so excited to start using Field Force Manager and the new phones that she didn't even wait for her other service contract to expire. "This system is just phenomenal," she says. "Just to let you know how valuable it is to us, I still have a contract with our old cellular provider; we're actually paying for both right now. Having Field Force Manager is that worth it to us."

She also has nothing but praise for her Verizon Wireless business specialist. "He's fantastic, he really is," she says. "With our other provider, it would take days for them to get back to us. With Verizon Wireless, any issues or concerns we have are dealt with immediately, and our satisfaction is always their first priority."

Solution:

- Switched over to Verizon Wireless and purchased rugged and user-friendly Motorola Adventure V750 phones for service fleet.
- Implemented Field Force Manager, which provides location and tracking, audit trails, job dispatch, electronic timecard capture, and turn-by-turn driving directions.

Results:

- Decreased fuel bills by 25%.
- Increased productivity (number of service and maintenance calls completed per day has almost doubled).
- Increased revenue by nearly \$58,000 per year by reducing time spent in office, and increasing billable hours.
- Improved communication.

"This system is just phenomenal. Just to let you know how valuable it is to us, I still have a contract with our old mobile provider; we're actually paying for both right now. Having Field Force Manager is that worth it to us."

KIM WILLIAMS
SERVICE MANAGER
ACCURATE HEATING, INC.