World Vision

World Vision
Selects FieldWorker
and Intermec
Technologies for
Food Distribution
in Africa

At a glance

Industry: Field Service

Products: Intermec CN3, FieldWorker Enterprise software

Program Results: With a desire to enhance its food distribution efforts in Africa, World Vision deployed the Intermec CN3 and FieldWorker Enterprise software to create the Last Mile Mobile Solution project, replacing paper-based systems and significantly streamlining operations.

Mobile Computing Solution Replaces Paper-Based System, Cuts Administrative Time and Simplifies Delivery of Critical Food Supplies Where Most Needed

One of the most over-used phrases in technology is "mission-critical", where even the smallest product enhancement gets that label, whether deserved or not. In the case of World Vision—a Christian relief, development and advocacy organization dedicated to working with children, families and communities in nearly 100 countries—the more appropriate and credible term is "people-critical". World Vision works with more than 100 million people who face poverty, famine, disease and even armed conflict. Ensuring the accuracy and efficiency of distribution of food, medicines and services has a real—and immediate—impact on the quality of life of these people.

So it was no trivial task when World Vision decided to evaluate new and more advanced food distribution management solutions for its operations in Africa. The challenge for World Vision was to find a solution that would shorten the wait times in the field for the actual food distribution, maintain accurate and transparent

tracking and ensure delivery of the correct food quantities to every eligible recipient. The result of this search was a solution World Vision terms the Last Mile Mobile Solutions (LMMS) project that uses software developed by FieldWorker, a Canadian IT company specializing in mobile technology solutions, and ruggedized CN3 handheld computers from Intermec.

The challenges associated with food distribution in countries such as Kenya and Lesotho are immense. The average workweek for a World Vision food monitor, using the prior tracking solution, required an hour of reporting, and one of travel for every hour of actual project management in communities. Often, the field staff were putting in hours of overtime work to do the back-end data entry and reconciliation needed to meet the reporting requirements for World Vision's many donors, and for global audit requirements.

After an intense 12-month pilot that reached more than 20,000 people needing food assistance, the advantages of the FieldWorker/Intermec solution are already

clear. An independent evaluation found that the automated procedures saved each World Vision food monitor, nine hours per week. Furthermore, the actual food distribution processes were being conducted faster with an immediate benefit to the people receiving food from World Vision and on the time field staff had to spend in the distribution processes.

Much of World Vision's global outreach is in remote locations with little or no infrastructure. Their technology has to be rugged enough to withstand often harsh environments and powerful enough to support advanced capabilities such as image capture, scanning and wireless connectivity. Adding to the complexity, World Vision was seeking a solution that ensured that each family received the right food allotment.

"Thanks to innovative thinking with our partners, we have a last mile solution that links our humanitarian efforts right down to each person receiving food," commented Otto Farkas, Director, Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs for World Vision Canada.

The combined FieldWorker/Intermec solution enables World Vision to move away from a paper-based system to one that employs permanent bar-coded identity cards owned by each beneficiary. This solution enables beneficiaries to become active participants in the collection and use of their information as it pertains to humanitarian programming. The new LMMS system using FieldWorker/Intermec technologies, takes full advantage of the built-in imaging capabilities of the Intermec CN3 handheld computer. Each

beneficiary had their image captured by the CN3; the World Vision staff then used the FieldWorker application to capture additional beneficiary information for tracking and verification purposes. Ration sizes are calculated automatically in seconds, and the data is wirelessly uploaded, so that the field teams do not have to manually attempt to reconcile distribution lists with waybills.

The Intermec CN3 was selected over competitive products not only for its built-in imaging capability, but also for its reputation as a rugged handheld computer—one that would withstand the heat and physical stresses of the African context. "We knew that the CN3 was the ideal platform for our software,"

said Craig Tyndall, Director of Business Development at FieldWorker. "We knew that our Java-base FieldWorker Enterprise software would run without modification on the CN3, and would provide consistent performance in any situation."

For World Vision, the benefits of the FieldWorker/Intermec solution are better accuracy and tracking of food distribution, and a huge reduction in time spent on administrative tasks. World Vision expects even greater efficiencies as they explore the capabilities of the system. "We are excited about what this represents," said World Vision's Farkas. "The integration of handheld devices in the provision of aid offers the potential for transforming the entire work of aid delivery."

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