



A Friend Tire supervisor tracks his fleet with VeriVision.

Theft Deterrent

Mobile solutions that are put in place to solve a specific problem oftentimes end up evolving into indispensable business tools.

Such was the case for Friend Tire, a 42-year-old tire wholesaler that has eight office locations and serves 22 states. The company initially sought a mobile resource management system that would help it deal with a spate of truck thefts.

"We were having real problems in the early 2000s with our delivery trucks being

stolen," says Jim Schmidt, Friend Tire's driver supervisor. "We'd eventually recover the trucks, but by then they'd have been relieved of their merchandise."

In mid-2005, Friend Tire chose the Vericom VeriVision mobile resource management solution, which uses GPS-enabled devices communicating via the AT&T cellular network. The system, now installed in more than 80 vehicles, provides real-time data including location, travel speeds, and emissions times. The data are collated into reports that Vericom provides to its customers via the Web, which can be downloaded into a variety of applications, including payroll or spreadsheets.

"We implemented it to resolve theft, but it evolved into an important tool," says Schmidt.

The system has enabled Friend Tire to:

- ▶ track and recover stolen vehicles;
- ▶ improve customer service by letting them know a driver's whereabouts;
- ▶ track the time drivers spend at each delivery stop;
- ▶ exonerate drivers in accident disputes; and
- ▶ make it easier for drivers to check-in after hours.

Two thefts happened shortly after the VeriVision boxes were installed. Schmidt was able to go to the Vericom Web site and find the location of the stolen vehicles. Local police were notified and used the information provided by Friend Tire to track the vehicles. The first truck was recovered before the merchandise was even removed. The second involved a police chase complete with a helicopter before the thieves were apprehended.



Friend Tire drivers see 12-30 customers daily.

PARTNERSHIPS

NEXTWAVE and **ALCATEL-LUCENT** are collaborating to deliver a next-generation WiMAX broadcast solution. Alcatel-Lucent's suite of WiMAX products will incorporate NextWave's MXtv technology, which provides the broadcast and unicast of voice, data and media over individual streams. MXtv allows improved delivery of rich content without having to invest in new infrastructure.

SYBASE IANYWHERE is supporting Apple's iPhone within its Information Anywhere suite. Information Anywhere enables iPhone support without requiring changes to an enterprise's messaging infrastructure. It also supports the native iPhone email client and provides secure access to contact data, including corporate directory and personal contacts.

Email systems provider **POSTPATH** is also supporting **APPLE'S** iPhone, which will incorporate Microsoft ActiveSync following its next software upgrade. Though PostPath isn't a Microsoft email server, it offers native compatibility with ActiveSync and Exchange.

AT&T is bringing **WEBALO'S** Mobile Dashboard service to retail enterprises. The Dashboard helps mobile retail professionals access real-time business intelligence via mobile devices. Using the service, managers can view KPIs across stores, region, divisions and company; executives can evaluate the effectiveness of

point of sale promotions; and buyers can tap into sales information for consumer goods and respond effectively.

QED CONNECT launched a new IM Manager feature as part of its Omni Manager product. IM Manager allows I.T. administrators to record and archive all instant messages taking place on PCs, notebooks and handheld devices anywhere in the world.

DEPLOYMENTS

Following a trend among institutions of higher learning, **TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY** is deploying **MIR3'S** enterprise notification service campus-wide. **inCampusAlert** delivers messages via cellular and landline phones, SMS, email, fax and pagers to students, employees, first responders and customers during an emergency.

ROTO-ROOTER has deployed **GEARWORKS' ETRACE** software to its 1,900 field technicians. eTrace leverages GPS technology via the Sprint wireless network to improve management of field-based employees. Roto-Rooter reports a variety of benefits since the deployment, including more service calls conducted daily by each technician. In addition, the number of job re-audits has decreased to 9% of jobs from 31% before the deployment.

Illinois-based **PRAIRIE CARDIOVASCULAR CONSULTANTS** has deployed **ARUBA NETWORKS'** wireless LAN and secure mobility solution across its 28 clinic sites. Aruba's Adaptive Radio Management technology solved the Consultants' problem of wireless interference from neighboring clinics.

These two cases alone saved nearly \$70,000 in merchandise, not to mention the cost of replacing the vehicles.

But Friend Tire is using the solution for a variety of other purposes. "It helps with routing," says Schmidt. "We can tell where the driver is and let him know if we receive road alerts or traffic reports. If the driver's running behind, we can let the customer know where he's at in as little as three to four minutes."

Drivers see anywhere from 12-30 customers per day. "We really tightened up our stop times," says Schmidt. "My

drivers average seven to 10 minutes per delivery stop."

The solution has even helped resolve accident cases. In two cases in 2007, the company used the system to review the speed of its drivers at the time of the accident and determined that they weren't at fault.

The bottom line? "It saves us a lot of money," says Schmidt.

Schmidt and his fleet manager travelled to each Friend Tire branch office and installed the devices themselves into a fleet that includes both long-haul and day-run trucks. The

biggest installation challenge was dealing with a lack of access ports in the various vehicles the company owns or leases. "The new trucks have fewer and fewer access ports," says Schmidt. "We needed an access port that wasn't visible."

Vehicle tracking systems "seem to be the direction everybody's going," says Schmidt. "If you don't have a tracking system in your vehicles, you're behind the times. They're cheaper and more affordable [than ever] and it saves you a lot of money in the long run."

—SUSAN NUNZIATA

Strategic Thinking

Defining mobile strategy and architecture, selecting and managing devices, and maximizing the mobile Web are among the top issues enterprises will address in the coming years, according to Nick Jones, VP distinguished analyst, Gartner Consulting.

Jones presented the findings of a Q3 2007 survey of more than 200 European professionals during his keynote address at last month's Gartner Wireless & Mobile Summit in Chicago.

Jones advises enterprises to approach their mobile architecture in a series of steps:

>**Step 1:** Rationalize tactical mobile solutions to remove duplication and

inconsistency. Start the transition from tactical to strategic mobile architecture.

>**Step 2:** Implement multi-modal and multi-channel application delivery to mobile and other platforms. Make device selection, security and management a part of the overall architecture.

>**Step 3:** Deploy communications-enabled architecture that supports applications that exploit vice, presence location, unified communications and collaboration.

>**Step 4:** Create context delivery architecture that is able to proactively deliver relevant information and services to

support personalized services and react to "moments of need."

The looming battle for enterprises will involve wireless unified communications, says Jones. "(UC) is becoming a high-priority issue for organizations where users are demanding presence-enabled business functions, integration between applications and the PBX, and mobile email/collaboration," says Jones in his report. (*For more on unified communications and fixed-mobile convergence, see article, page 18.*)

When it comes to device selection and management, Jones says "consumers are continuing to push the bounds of what defines an enterprise device. You can't say 'no' and shouldn't say 'no.'"