



iPhone app enables sales decisions to be made in real-time

Scott Chemicals' sales team needed to access information, anytime, anywhere. A Convergence iPhone application has enabled decisions in real time while on the road...

Scott Chemicals are specialist suppliers of raw materials to manufacturing firms across New Zealand and Australia. Scott Chemicals provide New Zealand representation for a wide range of leading global producers. The firm specialises in products used for surface coatings.

INSTANT ACCESS

The highly mobile sales team at Scott Chemicals is constantly on the road, servicing clients across New Zealand and Australia. Their vision was to be able to sit with customers and make decisions with them in "real-time" on product purchases.

Buying decisions for Scott Chemical's customers depend on critical and time-sensitive information such as stock availability, viable alternatives and supply commitments which have already been entered.

Scott Chemicals needed to demonstrate to its clients instant access to salient data, which is a definite advantage within a highly competitive industry.

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

The sales team viewed the use of laptops and wireless cards in a face-to-face meeting as cumbersome and potentially distracting. They knew they could do better, said Philip Smith, commercial manager at Scott Chemicals. "We wanted critical commercial information available to our sales people and at their fingertips at all times. That would mean our clients could telephone us at any time of the day or night, our staff could be on the road or even in a supermarket but it didn't matter." The company was looking for a way that staff could respond immediately, with all the data they need instantly available via a device that doesn't require a start-up process or even internet connectivity. They spied the iPhone and the growing popularity of apps for the device.

Explains Smith, "One of the reasons that we were attracted to the iPhone was that it was discreet, and can be easily used during a meeting with a customer or supplier, as opposed to the complexity of laptops and data cards, etc."

"We wanted critical commercial information available to our sales people and at their fingertips at all times."

Philip Smith, Scott Chemicals' commercial manager

HOW IT WORKS

Convergence built an iPhone application for Scott Chemicals, a mobile solution that connects directly to core IBM Lotus systems at the firm's head office on Auckland's North Shore.

A sub-set of vital client data (including sales histories) is surfaced to the phone and displayed via an easy to use native iPhone application. What's more, all the data is stored locally on the iPhone so that sales staff are not reliant on data access/signal strength; in fact the entire solution is fully functional in off-line mode. Smith notes, "That's great when visiting far-flung clients or when surrounded by thick concrete on all sides."

Offline access was always a key customer requirement for this solution. Convergence had previously delivered a sales and inventory management system to Scott Chemicals which featured full functionality, both connected and disconnected. Management was very keen to create the same paradigm within the iPhone application. Smith conceded that data connectivity across New Zealand is better than it was a few years ago. However he added, "We did not want to be reliant on a data connection. We wanted a solution that was always available, even on an airplane, and one that would operate at lightning speed."

THREE WEEKS TO DELIVER

Convergence delivered the project within very

tight deadlines – three weeks end-to-end. Smith said that the solution helped to position Scott Chemicals as 'leading-edge' and highly innovative. It also positioned the company an ideal local representative for hi-tech producers in Europe.

He said the firm's goals had been ticked off. Sales staff now have immediate access to decision critical data at all times. The solution has also delivered tangible value to the customers of the firm, and the solution has decreased the time frames required to close sales orders. Smith said that his sales staff delighted, the overhead of sourcing data after a meeting and sending it to the customer has been removed. As well, the organization has been able to decrease their dependency on laptops and cumbersome and expensive wireless cards. The solution has enabled Scott Chemicals to leverage their investment in iPhones, making the devices an important business tool with daily benefits for both the sales staff and the customers.

DEVELOPER PLEASED

Mark Presnell, CEO of Convergence, called it "a highly innovative solution that we have enjoyed working on. The solution is highly customer centric. This investment in a powerful commercial application for the iPhone supports Scott Chemical's industry-leading position and is expected to increase the competitive advantage of Scott Chemicals within their vertical market." 

 **CASE STUDY**
> Scott Chemicals

 **AT A GLANCE**
Industry

> Importing/distribution

Business Objective

> A requirement for true mobility for the sales team. A need for rapid access to critical data at anytime/any place and a non-invasive tool that can be used discreetly during meetings

Solution

> Convergence iPhone app

Business Benefits

- > Immediate off-line access to decision critical data
- > Enhanced value to customers
- > Decreased time to win sales orders
- > Removes the overhead of sourcing data after a meeting and distributing to the customer
- > Decreased dependency on laptops and wireless cards
- > Leverages the firm's investment in iPhones
- > Increased competitive advantage

 **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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