
100 per cent wireless



World leading dairy farmer cooperative LIC realised big savings and greatly enhanced mobile services for staff by extending their Lotus Notes and plugging in Traveler...

Hamilton-based LIC (Livestock Improvement Corporation) is a dairy farmer owned cooperative and one of the largest integrated herd improvement organisations in the world. A world leader in dairy innovation, LIC today provides a comprehensive range of products and services including herd testing and milk analysis, artificial breeding, animal health, farm advisory, herd recording, DNA analysis, farm automation and mapping systems.

LIC staff are constantly on the road and need access to 'PIM' (personal information manager) services do their jobs from their mobile offices.

Lotus flowers

LIC have been using IBM Lotus Notes and Domino for many years. "Recently, LIC selected Convergence to upgrade its entire Lotus systems," says Mark Presnell, CEO of Convergence Limited. "As we engaged with LIC, they identified the new features in the latest versions of Notes and Domino and saw the opportunity to leverage their platform," says Presnell.

Clunky and costly

Previously, to bring PIM data to mobile phones staff were confined to updating calendar and

contacts using a 'third party' software that had to be installed on their laptops and phones. User's phones had to be physically connected to their PCs via cable. There was much trouble with this approach. There was no 'real time' experience for users and the lack of a management console meant that administrators had to track users manually in a spreadsheet with no usage data whatsoever.

Each year LIC spent over 800 hours installing and supporting the solution, and frequently had to bring equipment in from the field for fixes, adding to down time. Add to this the annual license cost of \$16,800 and it's not hard to see that LIC were open to finding a better way.

Traveler has significantly reduced cost, improved efficiency and functionality. It represents a significant step towards realising our vision to enable access to LIC's business solutions from any location and any device.

JOHN CRANE, LIC Executive Technology Lead

Enter: Lotus Traveler

LIC wanted to improve productivity of field staff and achieve better integration with PIM data, particularly for email, calendar and contacts. Clearly, reducing costs was also a significant motivation.

Lotus Traveler was the natural selection for LIC. The software comes at no additional cost with selected versions of IBM's Lotus Domino messaging and collaboration offerings – including the Express versions aimed at small to medium business.

Bringing email, calendar and contact data from Lotus Notes to a wide range of commonly used mobile phones is a core capability of Traveler. "While we have deployed iPhones for some of our users," says John Crane, Executive Technology Lead of LIC, "we also want to support other handsets running Android, Symbian and Windows Mobile. Lotus Traveler gives us this flexibility."

Making it happen

By the end of June 2010 the upgrade from Lotus Notes 6.5.4 to 8.5.1 was completed. This was a significant step and ensured that the prerequisites

for Traveler were now in place.

In July a dozen office and nearby field staff were selected for a pilot. The test group experimented with operating email in both manual and auto-sync mode and provided valuable feedback on the draft user guide. Administrators were able to monitor data usage, a first for LIC.

Go forth and travel

While staff attended a 3 day sales conference, the full upgrade of laptops was rolled out along with replacement phones where needed. A brief presentation and the custom user guide were all users needed to 'go forth and travel.'

LIC then negotiated new data usage terms with its provider which allowed another 25+ office staff to be equipped with Traveler. Finally, the old software was removed from all laptops and struck-off LIC's IT service catalogue.


The last mile

In December the Traveler Look-up feature was enabled, which updates staff phone numbers from LIC's internal phone directory to the Lotus mail server contacts on a nightly basis. Now all office phone numbers are conveniently available via Traveler Look-up for staff to make contact with the right person directly and without the need to contact reception.

In February 2011, 5 months after the initial roll out, the 95 field staff phones were upgraded to version 8.5.2.1 of Traveler, which allows upgrades to be 'pushed' to the devices saving significant time for any future upgrades. It also provides enhanced control and security and allows for overseas roaming to be disabled from the comprehensive administration console. A total of 158 users are now using Traveler.

Sales staff are very happy. Says one, "It's great to be able to check and reply to emails while in the field, particularly as my car is my office. I see huge advantage in Traveler."

Daniel Nin, Lotus Notes Administrator at LIC says, "I found Convergence great to work with for both our Lotus Notes upgrade and Traveler projects. [Staff are] knowledgeable, helpful and seems to always have the 'inside track' on what is going on."

Convergence has deployed Traveler for a number of its clients, including Toyota Financial Services, Douglas Pharmaceuticals, Hynds Pipe Systems, Scott Chemicals and nsaTax. 

AT A GLANCE//

INDUSTRY

- Agriculture

BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

- LIC wanted to reduce costs and deliver a better service to field staff for mobile access to email, calendar and contacts data

SOLUTION

- Lotus Notes upgrade with Lotus Traveler

BUSINESS BENEFITS

- Ongoing savings in excess of \$40,000 p.a. were realized
- Improved PIM services were deployed to 158 staff
- Improved efficiency and a significant step towards the company's vision of access to LIC's business solutions from any location and any device were achieved

FOR MORE INFO//

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