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Case Study

Industrial Products Distributor Achieves Paperless Advantage with StreetSmart®

StreetSmart Helps GrayBar Maintain a Laser Focus on Customer Service and Driver Productivity through Electronic Mobile Data Collection

The Company

Graybar, a Fortune 500 company, specializes in supply chain management services. It is a leading North American distributor of high-quality components, equipment and materials for a number of industries.

With more than $5.7 billion in revenue (2013), Graybar employs thousands of men and women at more than 250 North American distribution centers. As one of North America's largest employee-owned companies, Graybar has the power and stability of a big company coupled with the integrity and drive of a neighborhood business.

Founded in 1869, Graybar procures, warehouses, and delivers tens of thousands of electrical or communications and data products, components or related services to its customers. Graybar stocks and sells hundreds of thousands of items from thousands of manufacturers.

If a customer needs an end-to-end solution for a lighting project, switchgear upgrade, a local or wide area network, or even a half-mile of electrical conduit, Graybar has it. And they deliver it when and where it is needed.

Through its distribution network and value-added services (including kitting and integrated solutions) Graybar is helping its customers to power and network their facilities with speed, intelligence and efficiency. By adding sophisticated logistics and project management to its operations, Graybar has become a vital link in America's supply chain.

The Challenge

As warehouse supervisor at industrial products distribution, Willie Thornton's main job is to ensure that customers receive everything they ordered on time. He relies on a team of 13 truck drivers, who deliver electrical and communications gear to contractors, service providers and companies around the country. He also uses frequent communication to keep up with the steady flow of transactions and deliveries. At least 20 times a day, a customer calls him to inquire about the status of their orders.

"Things are looking pretty well for this year but we're just trying to grow sales right now," says Thornton. This is a familiar sentiment these days. Many companies are having to work harder than ever to build their businesses back to pre-2008 revenue streams.

Benefits

- Easily provide customers with real-time information about deliveries
- Seamless integration between StreetSmart and Graybar's SAP back office system allows delivery confirmation
- Drivers can take and attach photos of signed packing slips and goods delivered to job records
- Cut administrative costs while improving customer service

Graybar finished 2010 at $4.6 billion in revenues, a 5.4% increase over 2009. But it was still well short of the $5.4 billion in revenues in 2008. Growing sales requires a laser focus on customer service and productivity.

The Solution

The StreetSmart mobile enterprise software application has helped Graybar transition from paper timesheets and activity reports, to the electronic capture of data on field workers' mobile phones. This gives Thornton and other managers real-time capabilities for customer and delivery updates, since the cell phones automatically collect time and location data for each stop a driver makes, which is then streamed wirelessly to the StreetSmart web management application.

When customers call for delivery status, Thornton can look in StreetSmart, which integrates with Google Maps. He can view near real-time locations of drivers and provide customers with an accurate estimated time of arrival. Previously, service reps only knew when shipments left their warehouses.

"I had to call the driver, which might make him lose focus on the road," Thornton says. "This is safer and faster."

Graybar has also integrated StreetSmart with its SAP system to capture delivery data. Customer service reps can look up an account and see who signed for the materials, and the time and date of the delivery. This helped improve customer confidence.

> *"Before, customers would only have a signature as a proof of delivery. StreetSmart gives them a visual to see the actual product that was delivered"*
>
> Willie Thornton, Warehouse Supervisor, Graybar

For more info on Graybar visit www.graybar.com

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The Results

An often-used StreetSmart feature at Graybar is JobPix, which provides photo proof-of-delivery by attaching an image to the job record. Once a customer accepts a shipment, the driver uses the cell phone's camera to capture a photo of the signed packing slip and the delivered goods.

"Before, customers would only have a signature as proof of delivery," Thornton explains. "StreetSmart gives them a visual to see the actual product that was delivered."

Managers can view the same images in StreetSmart later to double check that the customer received the correct shipment. "Our customers really appreciate this as they can see what actually arrived," Thornton says. "It eliminates the 'he said, she said,' conversations.

"Having comprehensive electronic delivery records also helps Graybar negotiate customer contracts based on performance and gives accounting staff more information, in the case of invoice discrepancies," adds Thornton.

All of Graybar's delivery drivers now use StreetSmart to record the start and end of their shifts and deliveries on their cell phones. These times are all location-stamped, which offers a high level of accountability across the fleet and has reduced overtime. If accounting personnel need to verify a driver's hours, they no longer need to search through file drawers for the paper time sheets. They can simply check StreetSmart from any PC or from their mobile phone. This saves time and reduces invoicing errors for Graybar customers, according to Thornton.

Graybar's innovative use of StreetSmart and its JobPix feature was recognized as one of the 20 Great Ideas of 2007 by InformationWeek. Graybar also believes that the StreetSmart system provides a unique competitive advantage. In fact, the company markets the system's benefits directly to its customers under the name "Graybar Delivery Advantage".

"The StreetSmart deployment has been an absolute success story for Graybar," says Dennis Grousosky, the company's VP of Service & Administration. "We've significantly cut overtime, saved on administrative costs and reduced data errors. More importantly, customers are clearly more satisfied with the service they are receiving from us. The value StreetSmart provides far outweighs its cost."

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North America +1 (888) 438-3308 , Western Europe +44 (0) 1628 607000 , Central and Eastern Europe +49 (0) 69 489813-0 ,
Asia Pacific +972 3 765-9400 (Tel Aviv) , +61 0 3 9946-6400 (Melbourne) , +91 124-4947050 (New Delhi) , South America +55 (11) 3900-1151 (Brazil)