Mi-Forms Case Study: SpectraSite

Mi-Forms provides a solution for efficient capture of data for cell tower inspections

Previous Process:

At least once a year, SpectraSite's field support managers must inspect 7700 cell towers located throughout the United States. During these inspections, the field support managers inspect the sites, perform tests to monitor lighting, power and other elements, meet with the land owners, the wireless carriers, and potentially even the city, county, or state officials. Field support managers have an important role in SpectraSite's public image.

Previously during these cell tower inspections, field support managers manually entered data into an Excel spreadsheet and took photographs of the site. This inspection, including the data capture and photographs, could take anywhere from 30 to 90 minutes. After the inspection, field support managers returned to their home office and manually reenter the data captured on-site into a proprietary application and upload the photos. This effort could take as much as 3 hours, depending on the connection speed and the complexity of the tower monitored.

Current Process:

SpectraSite wanted to improve the ease of use, cost effectiveness, and flexibility of their mobile data capture activities. SpectraSite had the following objectives for this project:

- Assurance of data integrity.
- Reduce the imposition on the personal time of the field support managers.
- Increase time savings and efficiency of the inspection.
- Decrease the costs of the data collection process.

After looking at two other vendors, SpectraSite decided to use Mi-Co's mobile data capture solution. "Mi-Co is located right around the corner, the sales team was very knowledgeable and the product was simply the best available," said Charles Schroeder, Director of Systems Development at SpectraSite. In comparing products, Mi-Co's form creation was the most straightforward and Mi-Forms offered functionality that was not available through other products.

SpectraSite replaced its previous process with a Site Data Form created via Mi-Forms. The Site Data Form has embedded pictures, engineering drawings, and contact information. Managers can upload all of their scheduled sites in the morning, saving keyboard time. They then fill out the Site Data Form on a Tablet PC while inspecting the tower. This saves approximately two to three hours a day for a field support manager, since the data and photos taken during the inspection can be automatically uploaded to their home office. Previously, this would have been a manual step. SpectraSite is looking forward to applying Mi-Co technology to other applications throughout their company.

Benefits:
SpectraSite engages a third party to install different antennae at a specific height. It is important that this information is correct because it would be quite expensive to have an antennae installed incorrectly. Therefore, it is quite important that the data collected by the field support managers is an accurate description of the cell tower site. This data provides information on the amount of space left in a cell tower site and whether the site can support additional antennae. Mi-Forms is able to interpret, review and correct handwritten data immediately, allowing for greater data quality than entries made manually through a keyboard and mouse.

SpectraSite's data collection time has decreased with the pre-population of Mi-Forms forms with their existing data, the inclusion of the appropriate drawings and schematics, and any open work orders for the site. SpectraSite projected a savings of two hours per inspection per field support manager with a significant improvement in data quality. SpectraSite's overall projected financial savings is approximately $60,000 per year per field support manager.

Bottom Line:
Greater Data Integrity implemented within an Efficient Data Capture Solution.

SpectraSite Communications, Inc.
SpectraSite Communications, Inc., based in Cary, North Carolina, is one of the leading providers of outsourced antennae sites to the wireless communications and broadcast industries. SpectraSite's business includes the ownership, licensing, and leasing of antennae sites on towers. SpectraSite's portfolio includes over 7,500 owned towers concentrated in the top 100 markets in the United States. SpectraSite's customers are leading wireless communication providers and broadcasters, including Nextel, Cingular, Spring PCS, AT&T Wireless, Verizon Wireless, Cox Broadcasting, and Clear Channel Communications. For more information, please visit http://www.spectrasite.com

Mi-Co
Mi-Co, the mobile data capture company, provides digital writing software to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire process of capturing and using data. Mi-Co's end-to-end enterprise Mi-Forms Software System enables flexible forms design and the capture, handwriting verification, and communication of forms based data for enterprise users. Mi-Forms supports enterprise data capture using the Tablet PCs, Digital Pens, Pocket PCs, and signature capture devices. Mi-Co is headquartered in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. For more information on Mi-Co, please visit www.mi-corporation.com.

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