



BlackBerry Customer Success Story

Municipality Monitors Compliance with By-laws, Helps Streamline Licensing Process with BlackBerry Smartphones



The City of Vaughan is a municipality located near Toronto, Ontario, Canada and is a government office serving approximately 250,000 residents. Vaughan is one of Canada's fastest growing cities, with a population projected to increase to 430,000 by 2031. The area is home to a diversified, expanding employment sector with more than 8,000 businesses employing more than 150,000 people.

Industry: Government

Region: North America

Company Size:
Large Enterprise - 2,500 Employees

Email Platform:
Microsoft® Exchange

Solution: Freeance™ Mobile by TDC Group Inc.

THE CHALLENGE

Municipal Enforcement Officers in the City of Vaughan are always on the go, checking local business and service providers for their compliance with the city's by-laws. Restaurants, stores, taxi drivers and tow truck drivers can be checked for compliance concerning their premises, parking, garbage and anything else that affects the community. These investigations also determine whether licenses are granted for various business purposes.

But the existing inspection and licensing process meant officers had no way of looking up records from the city database. While they were at a location, they couldn't easily determine whether a business held a valid permit without calling the office to verify the information or waiting until they returned to their computers to check it themselves. According to a report completed by the City of Vaughan, there was a seven-day lag in processing new licenses into the database because of the labor-intensive inspection process.

"Vaughan is a fast growing City and we wanted to be a leader in the use of innovative technologies that make service delivery better," said Dimitri Yampolsky, Chief Information Officer, City of Vaughan. "These officers already carry so many devices for communication, such as a walkie-talkie, laptop and a phone. We really liked the idea of consolidating all that technology into one device that could do it all - and that was the BlackBerry® smartphone."

THE SOLUTION

The City of Vaughan was already using the BlackBerry solution for executives and senior managers and liked the platform's many advantages. But the BlackBerry solution also gave them a key advantage: the ability to create two field-ready applications. They met a budgetary mandate to maximize their internal resources by building their own applications in-house.

"The BlackBerry solution is not just a messaging device, it's a platform for delivering applications cost-effectively and with a high standard of security," said Yampolsky.

One of the apps they created, called the Mobile People Application, accesses GuardCard, which is a city database that includes photos of licensed individuals. Before an officer goes into a building, he or she can look up information on their BlackBerry smartphone about whether the business has a valid permit. The officer can also look up information about taxi and tow truck drivers, with an accompanying photo, to make sure the driver of the vehicle matches the licensing information.

“The BlackBerry solution gives us a management tool that improves the efficiency of our employees and the quality of our service to the community in the City of Vaughan.”

Dimitri Yampolsky
Chief Information Officer
City of Vaughan

KEY BENEFITS

- Reduced phone calls and increased productivity in the field
 - Faster updating and processing of licensing information
 - Cost savings in building applications using in-house expertise
 - Access to a snapshot of where problems exist
 - Prepares the city for the ongoing needs of a growing population
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The city's second BlackBerry app is called the CTS Mobile Viewer and was built using the mapping platform, Freeance Mobile™, supplied by their wireless partner. Freeance Mobile is designed to offer mapping and location information to mobile applications that connect with enterprise Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

“A city administrator or manager can use the BlackBerry smartphone to look at an area and can quickly see if there has been a lot of complaints in that area by looking at colored dots on a map,” said Neil Davies, Project Lead, System Analyst. “It's very user friendly: you can zoom in and pan out right from the application to see if there have been complaints about things like garbage pick up or other by-law infractions.”

CITY OF VAUGHAN'S BENEFITS

The Mobile People Application is helping the city make great strides in streamlining their review and licensing process. The City of Vaughan's study on time saved indicates that mobilizing this process is helping to reduce hours of phone time per day between clerks and officers.

“The officer can stand outside a building and check the permit status of the business,” said Yampolsky. “If their permit is valid, they don't have to go in and can move on to the next business. They also don't have to make phone calls back to the office and tie up administrative time verifying information.”

Officers also enter information about permit status on the spot, using their BlackBerry smartphones. This ability is helping to cut down service cycles - from seven days to almost half the time, according to Yampolsky and the city's own analysis. Enforcement officers also have more time to look at nearby businesses to determine any by-laws are being broken, which is helping to increase compliance with city bylaws.

The second application, Mobile CTS Viewer, is already considered a success in its first few months of deployment. Almost 80 city managers are using it daily. Tracking incidents and trouble spots in a convenient mapped format helps to reduce paperwork and contributes to a more immediate, visual record of where city challenges exist.

This snapshot is an effective tool to City departments. Supervisors and managers can look up an area and determine where the problems are and mobilize appropriate resources to get the problem resolved.

“It's a tool that helps measure our effectiveness in fulfilling our service levels to the residents and ensures we are a leader in the delivery of government service,” said Yampolsky.

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