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Peter Thornton, UK Field Service Manager, Northgate Information Solutions



## Northgate cuts costs and increases revenue with Vodafone workforce management solution

### Fast facts

**Customer:** Northgate Information Solutions

**Web site:** northgate-is.com

**Number of employees:** 6,000

**Country or region:** United Kingdom

**Industry:** IT services

### Customer profile

Northgate Information Solutions provides specialist software, outsourcing and IT services to the human resources, local government, education and public safety markets.

### Product details

- ViryaNet, a mobile workforce management solution from Vodafone.

As part of its IT services business, Northgate Information Solutions has a rapidly expanding systems support division, employing more than 130 field engineers. To improve customer satisfaction and capitalise on new business opportunities, this function needed to be managed more effectively. To meet the challenge, Northgate worked with Vodafone to implement a mobile workforce management solution that has resulted in substantial savings, enhanced field service effectiveness and increased revenue.

### Situation

Northgate Information Solutions is a leading IT systems and solutions company with a product lifecycle management commitment to its customers. The systems support side of the business is run from six regional centres across the UK, supporting around 5,000 users a year.

As an increasingly important part of the business, this support team is continually under pressure to deliver growing revenue and activity quotas, but without compromising Northgate's track record for performance. Meanwhile demand is increasing from customers for real-time reports on the servicing of their equipment.

The company conducted several small-scale internal initiatives to improve business operations. From the results, managers saw that a significant improvement was possible by enhancing its workforce management capabilities through mobile technology.

Robyn Tolley, Chief Operating Officer at Northgate, says: “We were looking to extend our in-house service management system to the service engineers in

the field. The aim was to maximise the productivity of our field workforce and enable us to manage our increasing volume of work.”

### Solution

Northgate chose to implement a mobile workforce management system from ViryaNet. This solution allows dispatch controllers to plan and manage assigned tasks for field engineers equipped with mobile-enabled laptops and PDAs.

However, it was proving difficult for the company to find a provider that could deliver a complete solution. It was only when Northgate spoke to Vodafone that Peter Thornton, UK Field Service Manager at Northgate, felt sufficiently confident to commit to the ViryaNet project. “We had been looking seriously at how IT systems could support our service business. Vodafone took the time to understand our processes and demonstrate how they could meet our requirements,” says Thornton.

Vodafone provided Northgate with an end-to-end solution, including design, build and implementation. Northgate is now able to allocate jobs dynamically and provide engineers with greater detail on job parameters and technical specifications. For the first time it also has a clear real-time view of engineers' activities as they complete work orders.

The system was rolled out with comprehensive end-user training of engineers and dispatchers and has now replaced time-consuming paperwork and unnecessary mobile phone calls. To ensure confidence and consistency, the application is managed from within Vodafone's own infrastructure, which allows Northgate to take advantage of a service level agreement covering performance, quality and availability.

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Peter Thornton, UK Field Service Manager,  
Northgate Information Solutions

### Business benefits

Implementing a mobile workforce management solution with Vodafone has allowed Northgate to improve efficiency, increase the volume of work it handles and reduce the costs associated with deploying effective service in the field.

“The Vodafone solution has had a dramatic impact on our business. We have better visibility of what's happening in the field. I can walk into our dispatch centre and see how work is progressing with one glance at the dispatch screen. Previously it was not always easy to know what was going on, but now we have an audit trail for each job from allocation, through acknowledgement, to arrival onsite and then completion,” says Peter Thornton.

- **Flexibility.** Northgate's central control team can dynamically allocate jobs to engineers in the field as the day's events unfold, maximising efficiency and raising the quality of customer service.

- **Effectiveness.** Engineers gain real-time information about job parameters, which enables them to respond more effectively first time and reduce revisits, contributing to greater productivity and cost savings.
- **Efficiency.** Engineers have access to parts and technical data on their laptops and can update logistics systems while out of the office, shortening the timeframe for responding to customer needs.
- **Visibility.** A real-time view of engineers' activities as they process work orders facilitates better management decision-making and job prioritisation.
- **Customer satisfaction.** The Vodafone mobile workforce management solution has allowed Northgate to offer a better service – direct feedback from customers indicates that they are noticing a significant improvement in the quality of job progress data.

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