



BlackBerry Solution Helps Municipality Become Model of Facilities Management

City of Hamilton

The **City of Hamilton** is a municipal government located in Ontario, Canada.

Challenge

The City of Hamilton needed to automate a manual work order system using the BlackBerry® solution to better organize and manage how facilities work is assigned, completed and reported across the City's 700 buildings and 3,000 properties.

Solution

The City of Hamilton deployed NOMAD, an application from Horizant, for BlackBerry smartphones, which mobilizes the way facilities management is handled. The solution is designed to automatically push out work orders from the City of Hamilton's back-end database which are then received by tradespeople on their BlackBerry smartphones.

The City of Hamilton's Results

- Builds on existing IT systems and, according to the City's internal analysis, helped to deliver 460% ROI
- Contributed to a near doubling of work order closure rates
- Provides better overall job management
- Positions the City of Hamilton as inspiration for efficiency

Success On BlackBerry

Industry: Government

Region: Americas

Company Size: Large Organization – 9,000 employees

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Type of Solution: Field Service, CRM & Dispatch Operations

BlackBerry Alliance Member Solution: NOMAD by Horizant

The Situation:

Be the Model for Efficient Municipal Facilities Management

The City of Hamilton, based in Ontario, Canada, is similar to many municipalities in North America. As a government office, it's responsible for managing extensive public resources, including the maintenance and upkeep of 700 buildings and 3,000 properties.

The challenge for the City of Hamilton was efficiently handling the work orders given to tradespeople that covered plumbing, electrical, and other maintenance tasks. Their existing system involved delivering these jobs by phone, fax and often in person. Work orders were frequently misplaced. There were delays in reporting work. It was difficult to follow up on work orders or know who was working on each project.

The City of Hamilton did their own calculations in-house and realized they had less than a 50% closure rate on work orders – in a year, only 5,000 of 10,000 work orders were closed. "We just had to assume work had been completed," says Chris Phinney, Systems Analyst, "otherwise we assumed we would have heard complaints, but that wasn't always the case."

The City of Hamilton decided to fix its broken system by using the BlackBerry solution and thereby position itself as a model of municipal facilities management.

Why the BlackBerry Solution?

Any approach to automating the City of Hamilton's work order system had to integrate with two things: their existing investment in the BlackBerry solution and their back-end facilities management database, ARCHIBUS™.

"Knowing we already had the BlackBerry® Enterprise Server in place and the BlackBerry solution infrastructure in place, made it even simpler to stay with the technology we know and trust," says Phinney.

Phinney was also clear that the solution had to benefit from Push technology. He wanted as near-to-real-time delivery as possible in the work order system, and did not want to have users requesting data from their devices. Everything had to be pushed out, and the BlackBerry solution was, to Phinney, one of the only technologies available with true Push capabilities.

Since the majority of the end users are supervisors and tradespeople, and not always as comfortable with technology, the solution had to be easy to use. To Phinney's delight, "even the people who were most resistant to trying the BlackBerry smartphones came back after a few weeks loving it. As soon as they got their hands on the technology, it was a total change in attitude."

"The beauty of our new system is that we've given it to people who have never touched a computer, never touched email, and they're able to jump right on."

~ Chris Phinney, Systems Analyst, City of Hamilton

How It Works

Application Type: Field Service, CRM & Dispatch Operations

BlackBerry Alliance Member Solution:
Nomad developed by Horizant

- The NOMAD application routes work orders to the BlackBerry smartphone as they are dispatched from the City of Hamilton's database
- The logic built into the system sends work orders that are in the same geographic area to the tradesperson's BlackBerry smartphone to help minimize wasted travel
- The tradesperson uses the application to accept or reject a work order and they can also create a new work order on-the-fly
- Any new work orders created in the field are sent back to the database to be assigned to the appropriate tradesperson
- Supervisors in the field receive the list of active work orders so they know what jobs are underway in the buildings they manage

New Work Order System Closes the Communications Loop

The NOMAD application for BlackBerry smartphones gave the City of Hamilton the ability to wirelessly push out work orders to their tradespeople and supervisors. The NOMAD application contains fields which can be adapted to reflect an organization's workflow and tasks.

Every morning, the City of Hamilton's ARCHIBUS facilities management database collates the day's work orders and automatically routes them to each tradesperson's BlackBerry smartphone.

"The tradesperson has the ability to accept, close out and report on their tasks from the BlackBerry smartphone" says Phinney. "We've virtually removed the need to have someone fax and phone in this paperwork, which reduces our administrative effort."

By closing the communications loop, the City of Hamilton estimates in its own internal analysis that it has helped to increase its closure rate to approximately 90% on outstanding work orders, from the unpalatable 50% they were closing before. The same ROI study shows the implementation of this new technology has also helped to cut down the time administrative staff needed to process work orders by approximately 66%. "With our BlackBerry solution, people now work, record their hours, mark the job as complete, and we know where everything stands on a daily basis," says Phinney.

People in the field can now also report any problems that they see while on-the-job – the City of Hamilton reports in its findings that since they have implemented the solution, it has helped contribute to an increase in reporting of approximately 28%. Before, a plumber might be working and see an electrical problem, but have no way of addressing the issue because it was not within his scope of work. Now, with NOMAD, the plumber can create a request for work from his BlackBerry smartphone and send it to the facilities Help Desk - so the problem is noted and reassigned.

The City of Hamilton can also do priority scheduling based on geography. If two work orders are in the same area of the City, the system helps to ensure that a tradesperson is assigned both jobs. That ensures they are not driving back and forth, and more efficiently uses their time and resources.

But by far the biggest result of note in their study is what they see as an approximate 460% return on investment in the new solution. According to the City of Hamilton, it expects to recoup up to approximately \$295,000 by becoming more efficient in the first year. And in the future, their internal analysis suggest, they should see that amount rise up to approximately \$750,000 a year as the solution is deployed to all mobile field staff.

Both Supervisors and Tradespeople Embrace the New Technology

Building supervisors also have BlackBerry smartphones with the NOMAD application. Before, supervisors often didn't know work was taking place in their buildings, unless they stumbled on it being done. According to Phinney, the BlackBerry smartphones have greatly improved their ability to manage the activities in their buildings.

"Now they see the work order, right on their BlackBerry smartphone, from our dispatch center, so they can control the budget for what's happening in their buildings," says Phinney. "They can see capital improvements that might be happening in the future and prioritize what work is completed or delayed according to their own priority lists."

Phinney says a great deal of thought went into ensuring the tradespeople would like and use their BlackBerry smartphones. Since many were not computer literate, it was important to ensure buy-in. Phinney arranged training and also created a desktop version of the application for people who needed more time to adapt to it.

"Even the people who were the most resistant at first, came back and said how much they loved their BlackBerry smartphone," he says. "They rave about it and now use it for everything."

For additional BlackBerry customer success stories, visit www.blackberry.com/go/success

The City of Hamilton's Results

Builds on Existing IT Systems and Helps to Deliver Approximately 460% ROI

According to their internal analysis, the City of Hamilton's new work order system has given them approximately 460% return on investment, or approximately \$295,000 in recovered efficiency in the first year. Because it takes advantage of two aspects of their existing infrastructure – their BlackBerry solution and the ARCHIBUS facilities management database – it also makes use of their existing IT investment.

Contributed to a Near Doubling of Work Order Closure Rates

The City of Hamilton also estimates in their calculations that they now have approximately a 90% closure rate on work orders – up from the 50% before, giving them much more control over jobs assigned and completed; their findings show that since the implementation of the new technology their work order processing time was cut by approximately 66%; tradespeople have eagerly embraced the BlackBerry smartphone and consider it to be an integral part of their workday.

Provides Better Overall Job Management

More City employees, including building supervisors, know exactly what work is assigned and planned to better the overall facilities work across all City properties; jobs are assigned to take advantage of geography and reduce travel costs; according to their study, there has been approximately a 28% increase in reporting from the field since the implementation of this new solution.

Positions City as Model of Efficiency

The City of Hamilton has positioned itself as a proactive municipality, focused on efficiency, cost reduction and performance in facilities management.



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