



## BlackBerry Customer Success Story

### Auto Body Repair Company Uses Digital Writing Technology and BlackBerry Smartphones to Help Increase Field Staff Productivity and Reduce Costs



Carmedic® is an auto body repair company specializing in paintless dent removal; 86 technician partners work independently across 24 states to repair minor dents and dings without having to repaint an entire vehicle. While Carmedic technicians are directed and supported by three staff members at the head office in Roxana, Illinois.

**Industry:** Field Service/Automotive

**Region:** North America

**Company Size:**  
Mid-sized Organization - 90 employees

**Email Platform:**  
Microsoft® Exchange

**Solution:**

- ExpeDataLLC® digital writing platform solution featuring Anoto® digital pen and paper technology
- BlackBerry® smartphone
- BlackBerry® Enterprise Server

#### THE CHALLENGE

In 2009, Carmedic processed about 80,000 invoices by hand - an inefficient and expensive process. In a typical business transaction, Carmedic technicians appraise the damage on a vehicle, provide a repair quote to the customer, perform the work and write up an invoice. Appraisals and invoicing were done on a paper form that allowed the technician to mark the locations of the damage on a diagram of the car.

Each Friday, Carmedic's technicians had to stop work at least 30 minutes early to find a post office and courier paper copies of their invoices to company headquarters. Each technician would separate all their invoices and fill out shipping slips by hand. And, when head office received the invoices, staff had to spend many hours entering the data into the company's files and accounting records.

Not only would technicians lose time they could have spent serving customers, but manual data entry meant it took a long time to process the invoices and pay each technician. Besides the lost productivity, each courier package cost approximately \$15 and, on the odd occasion, the invoices would get lost in the mail. "We were losing data and productivity," said Dan Binkley, CEO and chairman of the board of Carmedic. "I knew there had to be a better way."

#### THE SOLUTION

Binkley started thinking about how technology could solve Carmedic's productivity problems. "We looked into using a hardware solution like the machines that couriers handle," said Binkley. "But they were too expensive and the technicians would have had to learn a brand new process." Then, Binkley started to hear more about digital pen and paper. Carmedic decided to partner with ExpeData LLC, a company specializing in digital writing software platform solutions. ExpeData LLC had developed a system designed to gather, transmit and translate information leveraging Anoto digital technology and a BlackBerry smartphone.

Every Carmedic invoice has tiny dot-matrix print on digital paper. As the digital pen touches the paper, a camera activates and films the series of dots. Just like they'd always done, Carmedic technicians write out the customer's information and mark the location of the dents onto a diagram.

After each technician is finished with an invoice, the information in the digital pen is transferred via Bluetooth® to their BlackBerry smartphone, which then transmits the information to a digital writing server. The technicians' handwriting, which has now been converted into electronic data, is then sent to Carmedic's accounting software for immediate use.

“Thanks to the BlackBerry smartphone, our remote, mobile technicians are able to share information and business solutions – that just wasn’t a possibility before.”

Dan Binkley  
CEO and Chairman of the Board  
Carmedic

Entering data into a BlackBerry smartphone means technicians do not have to stop what they’re doing to send the information to head office – it allows them to be truly mobile.

“It’s the same invoice, so the technicians don’t have to change their habits or learn how to use a new piece of hardware,” said Dan Binkley. “It only takes one hour to complete the training.”

Because the system works just like regular pen on paper, the technicians are still able to mark down a 360 degree evaluation of a car. Only now, all that information is sent almost instantly to head office via their BlackBerry smartphones.

## CARMEDIC’S BENEFITS

“We had to use paper to go paperless,” Binkley said. “The cost of the digital paper is more than regular paper, but it is nothing compared to the cost of shipping invoices every Friday.”

In fact, Binkley has calculated that Carmedic saves over \$60,000 USD per year on courier costs. In terms of productivity, he estimates that the reduction in paperwork gives each technician an extra four hours per month to generate business. And the company has seen a return on their investment in less than six months. “The rest of it is just gravy,” said Binkley. “I love how you can dream up the way something should work and, with the help of the right tools, you can realize that dream.”

The lack of paper to process means that Carmedic can also limit the number of staff doing data entry. Before the BlackBerry solution, Carmedic planned to hire an additional employee at head office to handle the overwhelming number of paper invoices. Thanks to the BlackBerry solution, they no longer require this extra headcount.

One unexpected benefit of the BlackBerry solution has been an improvement in communication between Carmedic’s technician partners. “We’ve been pleasantly surprised by the amount of support and learning that takes place between technicians as a result of our BlackBerry solution,” said Binkley. In the past, each technician worked independently. If a problem came up on the job, there was no way for one technician to ask another for help or advice. Now, with the BlackBerry smartphone, technicians will routinely send a message detailing the problem to their counterparts and, most often, someone comes back with a solution.

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## KEY BENEFITS

- Elimination of costly cross-country courier packages
  - Savings of approximately \$60,000 annually
  - Return on investment in less than 6 months
  - Increased productivity in the field and in the office
  - Secure and reliable capture and storage of data
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