

CASE STUDY



Company

- British Telecommunications, a leading provider of communications throughout the world
- www.btplc.com

Industry

- Telecommunications

Challenge

- Improve customer service
- Improve field service productivity
- Reduce field service management costs

Solution

- @Road Taskforce

Results

- New, high-level customer services
- 30% field service productivity increase
- Reduce control centers from 100 to 3
- £175 million (\$325 million U.S.) per annum ROI

Using @Road Taskforce™, British Telecommunications Improves Productivity by 36%

British Telecommunications is one of Europe's leading providers of communications solutions including local, national and international telecommunications services, higher-value broadband and Internet products and services, and IT solutions. In the United Kingdom, BT serves over 20 million corporate and residential customers as well as providing network services to other licensed operators.

The Business Need

BT's ability to provide high quality service while achieving maximum productivity and low operational costs is vital to the company's competitiveness and success. But traditional manual approaches to field service management worked directly against BT's business requirement. Job allocation was inefficient, causing engineers to waste time—particularly in travel between jobs—and making it difficult to respond quickly to customers' problems or to demands for new lines. Finally, the cost of the management operation was high.

BT's challenge of scheduling thousands of field engineers was significant. The complexity lay in the multiple requirements and objectives of workforce scheduling.

"In any high-tech organization the field service engineers have a diverse range of skills needed to meet the breadth of customer requirements," said Paul Cleaver, head of BT Field Engineering Change.

At BT, the range of service engineer skills extends from residential telephone engineers to network switch experts. In addition, BT's three basic operational areas also have distinct skills demands: business and residential customer access, national business communications and core network.

And all of these need to be addressed in a geographical context because local knowledge is an invaluable asset in delivering high levels of productivity.

"The number of factors involved in the management and scheduling of our field service engineers meant that we constantly faced a logistical nightmare," Cleaver said. "We needed a solution that was dynamic, flexible and, crucially, able to manage the scale of our operation."

The Solution

One of BT's most important goals is to ensure skill utilization of its engineers and

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continued

to minimize redundant travel and waiting time. To achieve this, and to improve service quality, BT decided to take a completely automated approach to workforce scheduling.

"Taskforce was the only application able to meet that challenge," Paul Cleaver.

The @Road Taskforce application schedules field engineers' activities using information captured directly from field support requests. The key advantages of Taskforce are its ability to handle same-day scheduling, to mix emergency work with planned maintenance, and to modify the schedule dynamically using information direct from the field. Additionally, Taskforce manages job dependencies, ensuring that inter-related jobs are completed in the correct order to minimize waiting time.

Finally, the Taskforce application supports work controllers' and engineers' preferences to location and type of work, avoids allocating low-level work to highly skilled individuals, and increases job satisfaction by ensuring, as far as possible, that engineers operate in their preferred area.

"Taskforce has enabled us to manage the individual skill level of each job in reference to its location and the skills of the field engineers," said Cleaver.

The Benefits

Since implementing the Taskforce application in 1994, BT has repaid its investment in the product many times over through benefits worth £175 million (\$325 million U.S.) per annum. Additionally, its deployment enabled BT to introduce new, highly competitive customer service initiatives. These included a five-hour response commitment to business customers and nine-hour windows to residential customers.

Once the response commitments had been met without the need to increase staff, BT had the confidence to deliver further improvements. The "Today's Fault Today" pledge promises that any fault reported by a business customer before 1 p.m. will be repaired in the same working day. This promise could not have been cost effective without Taskforce.

Finally, the Taskforce application supports "what if" analysis. It supports operations managers in tactical and strategic resource planning by enabling them to assess the impact of major events, such as road work or adverse weather, and plan to meet them.

"In the highly competitive telecommunications market, excellent customer service is a significant competitive differentiator," Cleaver said.

The implementation of the Taskforce application has enabled BT to offer unprecedented levels of customer response that are highly valuable to both business and residential customers. BT is achieving 95% utilization from its highly skilled engineers located countrywide and maintaining a consistently high level of customer satisfaction with a technologically advanced, broadening product range.

"Taskforce is undoubtedly one of the most advanced work allocation systems in the world," said John Davies, COO of BT Wholesale.

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About @Road

@Road, Inc. is a leading global provider of solutions designed to automate the management of mobile resources and to optimize the service delivery process for customers across a variety of industries. @Road delivers Mobile Resource Management (MRM) solutions in three key areas: Field Force Management, Field Service Management and Field Asset Management.

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