Largest Canadian Courier Deploys E-Ship Services Using AirLink® Gateways

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From automated solutions to 24 hour pick up and delivery, Purolator provides customers with the services and customized solutions required to get theirshipments across town or around the world. A Canadian company, Purolator has an extensive service network, with approximately 12,000 employees, over5,000 ground vehicles and Canada’s largest dedicated air express fleet.

As the country’s largest courier, Purolator has the most extensive delivery network in Canada, providing coverage to over 825,000 postal code areas.Overall, Purolator processes over 5.5 million pieces (delivery and pick up) each week for destinations across Canada and globally. Based in Mississauga,Ontario, the company’s corporate culture encourages involvement and thrives on communication.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Purolator offers a variety of shipping solutions for businesses and consumers. One such solution is a cost-effective turnkey shipping system installed in highervolume customer sites, typically a warehouse or mailroom used as a company’s distribution or fulfi llment centre. The shipping system – called Purolator E-Ship™Server (ESS) – allows a customer to print shipping labels on site, with the transaction information collected by Purolator for regular invoicing. ESS is

afl exible and feature-rich application that can be easily integrated with customer warehouse management software (WMS) or enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems.

As part of a recent investment program, Purolator chose to upgrade to an IP-based user application in order to more effectively roll out enhanced featuresand functionality to its ESS customer base. To do so, the company moved away from the non-IP phone line connection used to connect to its back-endsystems. While the company is able to utilize the landline data links available from some customers in dedicated buildings, many of Purolator’s customers arelocated in multi-use buildings where piggy-backing on Internet connectivity is not allowed and/or new landline installation is both time and cost prohibitive.

“We deploy our E-Ship Server shipping solutions into many diverse environments,” explained Sam Hutcheon of Purolator’s Customer AutomationClient Services. “We needed a new way to connect ESS to our back-end systems to pull the transaction information and data updates required for accurate invoicing.”

SIERRA WIRELESS AIRLINK® SOLUTION

In order to provide the fl exible, fast and effi cient network that was needed to support this transition, Purolator partnered with Rogers CommunicationsInc. to provide a wireless solution utilizing the Sierra Wireless AirLink® gateway for dependable, always-on connectivity. Purolator chose thesolution because it is built on a powerful platform and processing environment that provides remote monitoring and two-way communicationsrequired to meet Purolator’s needs in operating and supporting the remotely deployed application. The intelligent cellular gateway enables remote datacollection, and its sleek, compact form factor enables integration within existing infrastructure and equipment.

“We use the ACEmanager™ one-to-one remote management tool to do all of our device confi guration and setup,” said Hutcheon. “Everything goesout preconfi gured; each device is a basic mirror of the others, with the only change being the device name.”

Hutcheon also commended the support provided by Sierra Wireless’ field service engineers, who were “instrumental in helping us understand whatwe could accomplish with the wireless devices, the management of the deployed inventory and how we could create a secure environment.” Sincedeploying the fi rst ESS system, Purolator has implemented a total of 1250 systems using the AirLink gateway. With transaction speeds increasingwith each new generation of cellular technology, Hutcheon is pleased with the performance of ESS and calls the integration of AirLink devices intoPurolator’s back-end systems and equipment “seamless.”

RESULTS

The quick and easy confi guration and setup of the AirLink gateway has signifi cantly reduced the waiting time for new ESS customers.

“One of cellular’s big advantages is that it is so much quicker to deploy than a new landline,” explained Hutcheon. “Cellular has cut our required leadtime from 8 – 10 weeks down to just days.” And that immediacy translates to improved customer service, as well as potential for quicker revenues forPurolator as customers get almost instant access to their shipping systems.

APPLICATION: BUSINESS CONTINUITY

CUSTOMER CRITICAL CHALLENGE:

- E-Ship™ Server on-site business solution handle high volume transactions at customer sites and require reliable connectivity for accurate invoicing

SOLUTION:

- Installation of over 1000 AirLink® gateways reduced by 20%

BENEFITS:

- Reduced capital costs by eliminating landline installs
- Secure and reliable connectivity
- Quick and simple activation
- Portability for re-deployment requirements