

# Ricoh SA improves customer service with mobile information devices

Ricoh SA has improved customer service by rolling out Windows-based mobile devices to all of its 120 field engineers. The devices give engineers and Ricoh SA's service centre greater control, flexibility and improved response capabilities as they are integrated with the call centre, service despatch controllers, and the Siebel-based back-end system.

"The system issues jobs, tracks spares availability both with the engineers and in stores, and updates controllers and the website into which customers have a view," says Abdul Arend, who heads up technical services at Ricoh SA. "It also removes our sole reliance on service controllers yet, with their vast experience, they remain in control."

Arend's engineers and the additional 150 of the indirect channel service around 50 000 active units. Ricoh SA's technical services division logs an average of about 6 000 calls per month. Service level agreements range from four hours to next-business-day and the average repair time is between 35 minutes and one hour.

## Skills are stored in a database

The handhelds make the technical service slicker because engineer skills are stored in a database, along with their stock availability and locations and the system can intelligently route engineers with the right skills, stock, and those in close proximity to customers who have logged calls. Engineers are immediately updated via the mobile devices with any changes to their schedules and there is no issue associated with regular cellphone communications.

Delivery vehicles and drivers interchange parts between engineers when necessary so that stock availability does not hamper a fluid operation. The devices are ruggedised, have extended batteries, cameras for bar code scanning and signature authentication capabilities are currently being developed.

"Engineers are now more in control, they have direct communications with our central hub for all the information relevant to their roles and they have more responsibility than before," says Arend. "We've experienced improvement productivity that has led to improved customer satisfaction based on the third-party, monthly audits conducted on our behalf."