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UK railway operator keeps mobile initiative on track with complete Samsung Knox solution

Secure devices and rapid support for different roles enable mobile workforce.



Challenge

Abellio runs railway franchises in England and Scotland that are committed to improving operations with technology. Each franchise relies on a small but critical IT team, who became overwhelmed by tasks related to deploying, managing, and supporting the thousands of mobile devices that must be customized for different user roles. Abellio needed to get ahead of device issues and improve IT morale.

Solution

Three Abellio franchises turned to a Samsung Managed Service solution, which provides phones customized for each franchise and role, personalized onboarding at each user's convenience, and complete IT control of devices. Samsung teams are able to configure, enroll, secure, manage, and update devices in volume by using Knox solutions.

Benefits

Railway IT staff can refocus on strategic initiatives because they can delegate mobile deployment and support to Samsung. Franchises can budget more effectively with a monthly subscription fee that flattens cost streams. And each franchise can add or edit device features with minimal effort as its strategy changes. Customized devices and customized onboarding result in more devices being used, franchises say, instead of stuck in drawers.

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Challenge

Delivering on the promise of mobile technology with small IT teams

As passenger volume on the UK rail system grows at around six percent annually, and is expected to double over the next 25 years, railway lines brace for increased congestion. Railway operators such as Abellio know they need to distinguish themselves through innovations that drive efficiency if they are to manage traffic and win franchise bids.

Mobile devices are a critical part of the vision. Station staff can easily improve the customer experience and swing into motion if a passenger's smartcard doesn't scan, or if a passenger has a question. Safety improves when workers use phones to communicate about unattended packages and dangerous objects on tracks. And repairs are easier when engineering staff can locate schematics faster.

Railway operations in London, Birmingham, and Scotland had previously provided employees mobile devices to help make them more connected and productive. But the small railway IT teams were spending too much effort deploying and maintaining the fleet of devices, even as many users decided not to use the devices.

IT morale suffered. Traditional deployment required numerous manual steps to configure and enroll devices, especially because each user role required a different configuration. Once the devices were out in the field, IT issues multiplied. Sometimes users didn't update their



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Abellio is a Dutch-based international public transportation company that owns and operates multiple rail franchises across Europe with 14,000 employees. Founded in 2001 as NedRailways and re-named in 2009, Abellio entered the UK market in 2004 as part of a joint venture and has grown its business by winning bids for rail franchises from the UK government.

devices, other times they would download a new operating system prematurely and break access to apps. This inconsistency kept IT teams busy and created the potential for operational issues. One example: A train driver without a functional phone couldn't move the train.

Away from IT and out in the field, Abellio's mobile empowerment strategy ran into additional issues.

- Most railway employees work remotely, and industry turnover is high. So, if an employee needed a new device or had a device that required repair, they often had to wait long periods of time. Without a functioning device, there was the potential for communication issues leading to problems and delays.
- User adoption was low, with hundreds of phones not deployed or used. Existing IT tools offered little visibility on the devices and device usage. Abellio wanted to maximize use and minimize the potential loss of assets and company data.

"The mobile arena was of particular importance to improve the customer experience and make sure our frontline staff and our colleagues have the tools to do their job," says Himesh Patel, head of IT at Abellio Greater Anglia. "One of the biggest challenges we had was that we're a relatively small team and obviously with a small IT team, it's very difficult to manage a big mobile estate."

The franchises wanted to reap the rewards of operational efficiency and minimize the effort to deploy, manage, and support the tablets and smartphones at scale. Railway IT teams, meanwhile, wanted to focus on other initiatives.

Solution

Complete Samsung solution provides customizations, onboarding, and support

To free its IT team from time-consuming device management and maintenance, Abellio turned to the Samsung UK team for a managed service subscription program that included high-end mobile devices, software tools, help desk support, and repairs across the entire device lifecycle.

Abellio franchise IT administrators now have a single point of contact within Samsung to help them mobilize users and support devices across broad geographic areas. Samsung stages all devices for the railway franchises. This includes unboxing, adding a screen protector, and configuring the phone or tablet according to the user profiles for that franchise.

With its Knox Configure solution, Samsung can customize devices for franchises and different user roles:

- Rebranding devices helps foster a sense of ownership. Knox Configure helps transform devices that look tailor made for ScotRail, Greater Anglia, and West Midlands. This includes branded boot-up animation, wallpaper, and relevant bookmarks.



- Different roles require different set up and apps, and each franchise requires four or five user profiles. With Knox Configure, the Samsung team can easily configure devices for multiple profiles: drivers who need a map application, on-train staff that require a smartcard reader, and engineers that need schematics. Each franchise controls devices at the user role level to minimize business risk and can deploy changes remotely.



"It is literally an end-to-end process," says Himesh Patel of Abellio Greater Anglia, "deploying the devices, managing the devices, answering end-user queries."

- The Samsung team enrolls large numbers of devices fast to security policies created in its enterprise mobile management solution (EMM) using Knox Mobile Enrollment, a free Samsung download. Credential pass-through helps reduce deployment time by prepopulating user details.
- To make sure each person understands how to use the phone or tablet, Samsung offers onboarding and training support to every worker, both remote and in-person.
- Samsung also offers rapid device replacement and assistance through its Business Services Centre and Next Business Day device replacement.
- To prevent business disruptions, the Samsung team uses Enterprise Firmware-Over-The-Air (Samsung E-FOTA) to control firmware and OS updates, including security patches and compliance checks. Timetable changes and other big updates take place on supported operating systems, then the OS update is pushed to users when the franchise is ready to support it.
- Abellio franchise can easily lock down stolen devices, or automatically reconfigure devices to the correct Abellio profile if factory reset.

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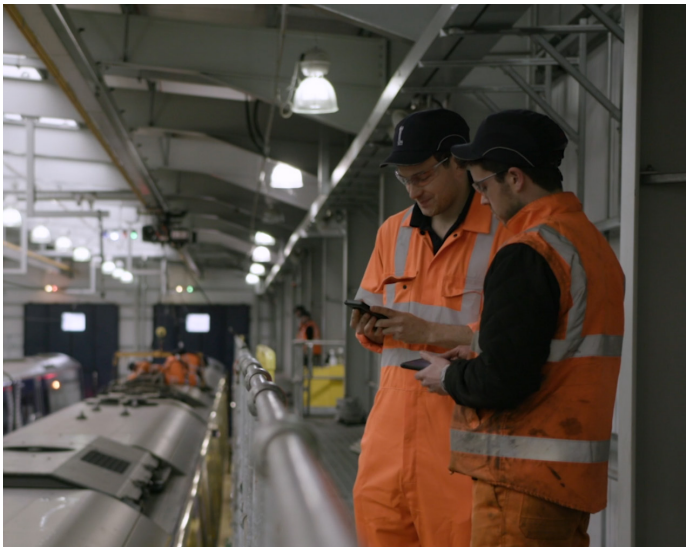
Benefits

Transforming operations with improved focus on priorities

As a result of moving to a subscription model using high-quality Samsung mobile devices supported by Samsung's powerful management tools, Abellio has helped transform its business.

More time for priorities. With efficiency gains and Samsung support, Abellio's franchise IT teams track deployments executed by the Samsung Managed Services team. This enables them to focus engineers on larger infrastructure improvements that have the potential to improve service reliability.

Flatter revenue stream. By moving to a Managed Service subscription model, Abellio changes to a simpler per-user cost that includes device, service, and repairs. The railways now pay for devices as an operational expense over three years.



Operational agility. Abellio controls all devices based on custom profiles that include unique apps. It can add or edit device features with minimal effort as the company strategy changes, allowing work to proceed in a controlled way without introducing risks to the business. The franchises can easily add or subtract devices as its business changes.

Greater return on device investment. Improved device deployment rate of more than 99 percent reduces investment waste. Lost or stolen devices shut down within minutes of being reported.

Abellio franchises now boast more than 30,000 devices in use across England and Scotland, all managed using Samsung tools and the Samsung Managed Services operation.

“What we were looking at from the outset was a business partnership, somebody that could be flexible but also adapt to our changes, and I think we found that in Samsung.”

Himesh Patel
Head of IT
Abellio Greater Anglia

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For more information

For more information about Samsung Knox Configure, visit: www.samsungknox.com/kc.

For more information about Samsung Knox E-FOTA, visit: www.samsungknox.com/e-fota.

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