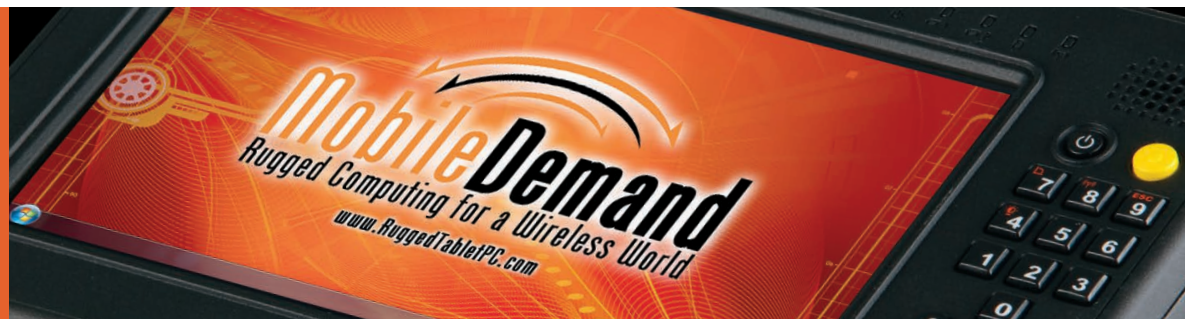# Case Study

PeopleNet
Industry: Transportation

CHALLENGE

Find a mobile computing tablet that is:
- Robust enough to run PeopleNet's applications
- Able to be locked down in a truck cab and unlocked for mobile use
- A best-in-class productivity tool
- Rugged enough to withstand the demands of trucking

SOLUTION

- **MobileDemand xTablet T7000 integrated into the PeopleNet onboard computing platform**
- **Bar code scanner, keypad and stylus data entry to improve efficiency at every stop**
- **Windows 7 OS and Intel processor accommodate additional applications and functionality**

RESULT

- **Reduce Days Sales Outstanding**
- **Reduce driver time at each stop**
- **Save on fuel costs by reducing out-of-route miles**
- **Reduce back office resources**

PeopleNet and MobileDemand xTablet Help Trucking Companies Stay Compliant, Cut Costs and Improve Productivity

Trucking. It's a tough business. With high operating expenses, compliance regulations, fluctuating fuel costs, and super thin margins, trucking companies live or die based on the efficiency of their operations and productivity of their drivers.

Perhaps no one knows this better than PeopleNet, a leading provider of onboard computing and mobile communication solutions to the transportation industry, primarily in the trucking sector. Since 1994, when the Minnesota-based company was founded, PeopleNet has been helping its customers improve efficiency and get the most out of their technology investments. Today, more than 1500 trucking companies throughout North America rely on PeopleNet systems to increase safety and compliance, reduce operating costs, boost productivity and improve customer service.

The PeopleNet Challenge

For its latest offering, PeopleNet searched for a technology partner that could provide an ideal rugged tablet PC for its onboard computing platform; one that could be used in the cab and also as a portable computer for pick-up and delivery.

"We've always been a customer-centric company. With each new product offering PeopleNet has been able to provide our existing customers with new functionality to help them cut costs and improve the efficiency of their operation. For our newest system, we looked for a partner that could provide a rugged tablet computer that would allow our fleets to take advantage of all the functionality our system provides in the cab and also allow them to take the device out of the cab to perform signature capture, do bar coding, take a picture, and capture additional work increasing the ROI," says PeopleNet CEO Ron Konezny.

The MobileDemand Solution

PeopleNet found that partner in MobileDemand and chose the xTablet T7000 as the platform for its new TABLET solution. The open system architecture and processing power were just two of the many reasons that PeopleNet chose the MobileDemand xTablet.

"Having a Windows 7 operating system on the TABLET is a real benefit to our fleets. Knowing that they have an open operating system, an operating system that connects to the widest variety of systems, peripherals and applications, gives the fleet the confidence that not only will the device service the needs they have today but will allow them the ability to grow that footprint over time," says PeopleNet Vice President of Product Management Matt Voda.

PEOPLENET
Performance.

"The ability to take the TABLET outside of the vehicle to perform a vehicle and trailer inspection is an example of how technology can help ensure the drive is safe and the fleet is in compliance."

Having the processing power of an Intel CPU on the TABLET allows us to handle various CPU intensive activities such as navigation, data capture about the route, information about geo-location of the vehicle," Voda continues.

The portability of the MobileDemand rugged tablet PC was another deciding factor. The TABLET can be locked down in a cradle in the cab as well as unlocked allowing the driver to take it outside of the vehicle and perform work.

"A key capability is the TABLET's optional portability. Trucking companies are operating in a highly regulated environment and fleets are finding that to operate out of compliance is becoming even more costly. The ability to take the TABLET outside of the vehicle to perform a vehicle and trailer inspection is an example of how technology can help ensure the driver is safe and the fleet is in compliance," says Konezny.

PeopleNet customer, Direct Drive Express, a regional carrier headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin agrees. They recently deployed the PeopleNet TABLET system and use the xTablet T7000 for vehicle inspections to ensure driver safety and compliance in accordance with the CSA government initiative.

"Government relations have become a lot stricter now that CSA has gone into effect. So we need to be ever more vigilant about our safety records. The TABLET helps us stay compliant and provide assurance to our customers that their freight will be delivered on time and safely.

The first thing a driver does after logging into the TABLET in the truck is take it out of the truck and perform a pre-trip inspection. At the end of the day the driver uses the TABLET to do a post-trip inspection. It's all done on the TABLET. No paper to get lost, no messy handwriting to decipher," says Dudley Larson, president at Direct Drive Express.

In addition to helping trucking companies improve driver safety and regulatory compliance, the portability of the TABLET helps PeopleNet customers expedite pickup and delivery operations.

"Fleets adopting the PeopleNet TABLET get the best onboard computing platform with electronic logs, engine data, and geofencing coupled with the best portable proof of delivery system which includes signature capture, bar code scanning and image capture," says Konezny.
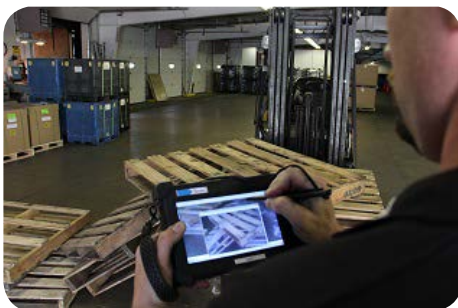
"Transportation firms are no longer going to be able to prosper by just moving freight from point A to point B. They are going to have to perform work when they pick up the freight, transport it, and then do work when they deliver the freight. The MobileDemand xTablet T7000 let's drivers access and capture more information, do work at a customer site and then update the supply chain," Konezny continues.

Larson from Direct Drive Express agrees. "When the driver arrives at the first location the dispatcher back at the office is notified. The driver doesn't need to make any notations regarding location, it's all done automatically. The driver will then take the TABLET out of the cradle and go inside. Sometimes the guy on the dock says they've got two more skids that need to be picked up and delivered. So all the driver has to do is take the TABLET and edit the order to reflect the change. After they are loaded on the truck the driver will have the dock personnel sign right on the TABLET to validate the number of skids picked up. Then the driver will get back in his truck and dock the TABLET. By doing so, a message is automatically sent to the office to notify dispatch about the change to the order and the system is updated," Larson says.

"Another great feature of the tablet is bar code scanning. We have a lot of product that's quickly on and off trucks and being able to track that, that's very, very important. That just eliminates huge amounts of cost and paperwork, huge amounts in cost of time. A conservative estimate is that the TABLET is saving the driver 10% in time spent at each stop," Larson continues.

PeopleNet customers also find the integrated color camera in the tablet to be very useful. If there is an accident, they use it to take pictures and send them back to the office in real-time. They also use the camera at a customer site to photograph damage to pallets and freight. That way if there is ever a dispute they have a record of what transpired.

Extreme ruggedness is another feature of the xTablet T7000 that is essential for PeopleNet's customers. It is built to be military tough meeting mil-Spec 810G standards which means it's tested to survive 26 consecutive drops from five feet to concrete. It's also sealed to an IP65 sealing rating to withstand pressured water. So it will survive the bumps, drops, rain and dust typical in just about any harsh environment.
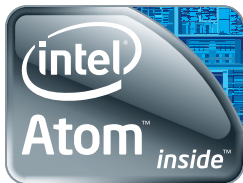

"Some of the other providers in the industry of similar technologies have recently launched non-rugged off-the-shelf tablets utilizing the Android platform. Fleets are taking these computing platforms into the oil fields, they're out delivering into warehouses, they're frequently getting in and out of the truck – all environments that can cause damage when these consumer-class devices are dropped. Drivers spend their day in a rugged environment and ruggedization in their onboard computing platform is absolutely critical," says PeopleNet COO Brian McLaughlin.

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"We were concerned of course about ROI, we were concerned about how it would hold up in a rugged environment. We had a salesman literally take the unit and throw it onto the floor, walk over and pick it up and it ran. These things are going to occasionally get dropped and we want to eliminate that damage factor as much as we possibly can along the way," Larson affirms.

In addition to helping PeopleNet customers stay compliant and improve efficiency, the PeopleNet onboard computing platform is also giving trucking companies an edge over the competition by providing better service to their customers.

"We needed something that would set us apart, to show our customers that we could do something that's superior to the other guys on the block. Now we have customers requesting pick-up and delivery times and we can give it to them. Customers love that," says Larson.

The xTablet T7000 is giving PeopleNet a competitive advantage as well, by opening up new markets. Historically, the company offered a fixed mount system for drivers that spent most of their time in the truck. The MobileDemand rugged tablet PC is allowing PeopleNet to provide a solution for trucking firms whose drivers spend a significant amount of their time outside of the truck.

"What we're seeing early is the multi-stop, multi-drop markets of food, beverage, some petroleum haulers, a lot of retail private fleets that want to do signature capture and bar coding, cross-town fuel haulers that need to be able to print receipts, and specialty haulers that need permits to be delivered down and viewed on the TABLET screen. These are all things that MobileDemand and TABLET can do for us that we weren't able to do before and it really opens up a whole new set of addressable markets for us," says McLaughlin.

The Results

Trucking has always been a tough, low margin business. But the demand for moving freight from one location to another has never been higher. Trucking companies that deploy rugged mobile tablet PCs and fleet management software solutions are cutting costs, increasing productivity and improving customer service.

According to PeopleNet some of the ROI benefits that their customers are achieving as a result of deploying the TABLET system include:

• Reduce Days Sales Outstanding from 12 to 2 days
• Improve inventory accuracy by 10%
• Reduce time at each stop by 10%
• Save $5,000 on fuel per driver per year (Avg. 100K/miles per year) by reducing out-of-route miles
• Enable remote training on the TABLET eliminating travel costs
• Reduce back office resources from one for every 20 drivers to one for every 50-100 drivers

It's clear to see that these trucking companies are beating the odds. By deploying PeopleNet fleet management solutions fleets are reducing costs, increasing safety and compliance, and improving customer service.

MobileDemand

Rugged Computing for a Wireless World

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