

The postal service is a crucial part of the UK's social and economic 'glue' – yet the advancement of SMS, e-mail and the internet has meant a big decline in transactional mail.

With traditional mail volumes falling by 7-11% each year, Royal Mail has been realigning its services to embrace new technologies that will secure its future. Parcel fulfilment (delivering parcels for online retailers and home shopping companies) is a key growth area.

### Changing how Royal Mail does business

How does an enterprise organisation like Royal Mail smoothly transform historic ways– without alienating staff and customers or losing its heritage?

Constantine Vaitsas, Information Technology Director at Royal Mail said: *“Business transformation is not optional for Royal Mail. We have to grow as a business to secure our future - whilst taking into account the needs and expectations of our customers and employees. It's a huge challenge in an organisation of our scale, we needed robust planning, scalable technology platforms, co-ordination across large, geographically dispersed teams and strong management of change to succeed.”*

# Reinventing to survive

## Royal Mail's 'Tracked' technology platform transforms parcel delivery

### Launching a new product for a new era

In autumn 2009 Royal Mail launched Tracked, a new product that enabled people at home expecting a parcel to track the whereabouts of their goods in real time. Tracked scans and records a unique bar code for each parcel at every step of the delivery journey. To make that possible, Royal Mail has deployed new software, the largest Wi-Fi network in the UK and in excess of 30,000 PDAs to delivery staff to enable them to track parcels through the logistics network to the doorstep, where a signature can also be captured as proof of delivery. This allows customers to see exactly where goods are on their journey and allows companies to be confident that products have reached the recipient.

Tracked has mutual benefits for all parties. Whilst offering visibility and confidence to the end user, it also provides the fulfilment companies with confirmation of delivery. This confirmation is highly valuable. For example, it may allow an online retailer to reduce fraudulent customer claims, or, it may enable a broadband provider shipping a new router to trigger the line switchover on receipt of the item.

As a provider, Royal Mail is able to work more accurately and invoice customers based on the number of parcels scanned - without the need for manual counting and checking. The whole process is faster, smoother and more secure – but it would require a major programme of activity to deliver the elements required.

### Rolling out the new solution

To offer Tracked across the UK the project team needed to train 35,000 members of staff in how to use the new technology and then ensure that 30,000 PDAs and 35,000 equipped vans were available for them to use. The employees' ability to adapt quickly would be key to success, and as a result of a big team effort, the group managed to roll out the PDAs and achieve national coverage in just seventeen weeks. Their achievement in meeting the timescales may belie the challenges involved – much time was spent working with IT partners to ensure the all important technology would work seamlessly, at over a thousand Mail Centre and Delivery Office locations across the UK. It was essential to win the confidence of both the operational management and the postmen on the doorstep.



### Using programme management expertise to deliver on time

With key deadlines looming at the crucial latter stages of the project, Royal Mail engaged The Berkeley Partnership to help them reach their end goals. Berkeley worked closely with the project team and supplier base to keep critical activities and deliverables on track. Hadley Baldwin, Partner with The Berkeley Partnership said he was impressed with the team's determination to realise their vision – even in challenging

times. Hadley said: *“The project team stayed focused on the 'big picture' of the new solution, and always looked for a way forward when a problem arose. I think that determination became a hallmark of the project.”*

### Reflecting on the project

The Tracked product has something for everyone: for the customer at home - no more waiting helplessly for a parcel with a lack of information, and for fulfilment customers and Royal Mail – fewer lost and stolen items and more efficient ways of serving their customers.

Constantine said: *“Royal Mail Tracked has been a challenging project for us and a key step towards Royal Mail embracing item tracking across the operation to offer our customers new products and services and a radically improved experience. Creating new value-added product features based on the tracking data is the key to countering the structural mail volume decline. And the same tracking data will help us drive greater efficiency in our operations.”*



To find out more about Berkeley's work, visit [www.berkeleypartnership.com](http://www.berkeleypartnership.com)

