Irish Electricity Distribution Utility Plugs Into Kony to Power Its Mobile Strategy

ESB Networks (ESBN) is the operator of the power distribution network for Ireland's electric utilities. It provides services to all electricity customers and all generators and suppliers of electricity in the Republic of Ireland. When ESBN went looking for a new mobile applications platform, the need was urgent. A critical system used by field service technicians relied on hardware and software that was at the end of life. Yet rather than modernize just that one app, ESBN was determined to find a long-term solution to all their mobile needs.

"As one of the leading utilities in Ireland, servicing more than two million customers, we needed a mobile solution that our field technicians could rely on to help streamline work orders and improve overall efficiency," says Eugene O'Sullivan, Networks Mobile Programme Manager, ESB Networks. "We turned to Kony to help mobilize our field services because data is very important in our industry and Kony's solutions offered the data synchronization we needed."

**ESB NETWORKS**

Industry:
Electric Utility

Solution:
Kony Mobility Platform

- Kony Visualizer
- Kony Studio
- Kony MobileFabric
- Kony Field Service for SAP Business Suite®

Challenge

ESBN operates the power distribution network for the Republic of Ireland electricity market. ESBN is a separate company within corporate ESB and is responsible for constructing all the distribution system sub-transmission, medium and low voltage electricity network infrastructure in the country, and for managing this infrastructure. ESBN also manages the transmission assets owned by corporate ESB and ensures that the transmission infrastructure is developed and maintained in accordance with agreed requirements.
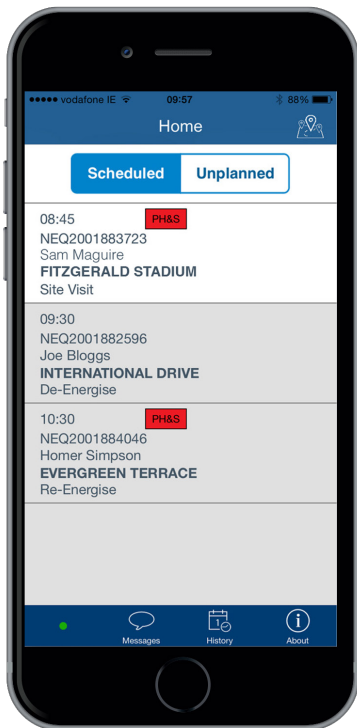
ESBN's immediate need was to upgrade a mobile application used by field technicians who install and maintain metering assets, which includes activities such as new connections, meter exchanges and reconnections.

The previous mobile application, created in 2007, was designed for ruggedized, industrial hand-held devices. Over time, the manufacturer stopped making these devices

and the operating system was no longer supported.

This time, ESBN was determined to choose a mobile platform with a long future ahead of it – ideally not tied to any one device or mobile OS. ESBN saw an opportunity to take advantage of standard consumer technologies – using off-the-shelf mobile phones, where practical, while reserving the option to use ruggedized devices in combination with a standard mobile OS in other cases.

Kony's approach to making apps portable across mobile devices allows ESBN to select which device to target for different needs. ESBN took comfort in knowing that there was a potential option to recompile an app originally targeted at one mobile OS and deploy it on another.

After a thorough procurement process, ESBN chose Kony because it was the best fit for its current and future mobile requirements.

Objective

Beyond updating the basic mobile technology, ESBN wanted to deliver a more performant solution that would provide greater efficiency to its field workforce.

Key requirements included:

- A more intuitive and convenient user interface

- Offline functionality, with data replication, so the app remains usable when no network connection is available

- High security

- Integration with ESBN's enterprise backend system, SAP ERP 6.0 IS-U, a utility industry version of SAP's enterprise resource planning software

Solution

For the new app, known as MyWork, ESBN broke away from using an industrial hand-

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held device, instead picking the iPhone 6 in combination with a sturdy case.

MyWork acts as a mobile front end that gives field technicians live access to SAP
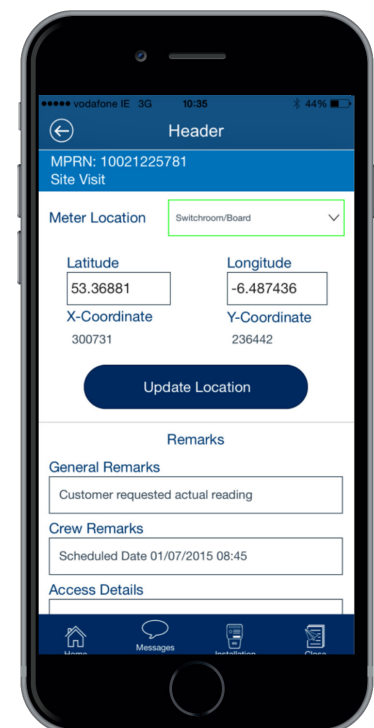
IS-U which is ESBN's work management system. Once work orders are entered in SAP IS-U, they are prioritized and assigned using Click Software's schedule optimization system. Workers see their first few assignments of the day when they sign onto the app. As the day progresses, the scheduling system continues to re-optimize assignments and dispatch work orders to field technicians.

For every work order, the technicians must collect data. They scan bar codes on the meters, using the iPhone camera for new connections and meter exchanges. Technicians can update the meter location co-ordinates if required, record the installation data including recording the current meter reads, and confirm the work carried out on-site. When their work is done, they can log it as complete or record a recommended follow-up.

For ESBN, it was critical that the mobile app fit with existing enterprise applications, rather than requiring them to rework or compromise the existing enterprise

architecture. As Kony is a silver partner in the SAP PartnerEdge program and SAP integration is a key strength of Kony's MobileFabric architecture, ESBN felt confident that Kony could meet their enterprise integration needs.

In addition, Kony's data synchronization architecture met the requirement that the app be able to function offline, when a network connection was not available. MyWork also uses the LDAP directory services standard to allow users to sign in with their standard corporate credentials to enforce consistent enterprise security.

The MyWork app supports 83 types of work orders and each work order type was subjected to extensive testing. The software development process was helped along by initial prototyping in Kony Visualizer, which allowed business users to agree on the desired look and feel for the app. This was followed by coding of the app logic in Kony Studio.

Business Benefits

With MyWork, about 300 field service technicians retired bulky handsets in favor of an iPhone and a much faster, more modern app.

MyWork integrates with Apple Maps to provide a map view of work order locations. If the precise location of a meter has not been recorded, a technician can add the GPS coordinates to make it easier to locate next time.

Technicians can work offline, however once online, all data gathered in the field is automatically replicated to SAP IS-U. The speed of that data sync is one of the improvements field technicians appreciate the most.

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time, the devices could not be used for anything else," says O'Sullivan. "With the new MyWork app, synchronization takes a second or two, and the process runs in the background. Even when the device is out of network range, data is saved and automatically transmitted when triggered again by the user, provided a connection is available. That's a massive performance improvement from a user perspective."

Change Management

A key success factor was involving users at every stage of the process. The project worked very closely with users involving them in user workshops and seeking
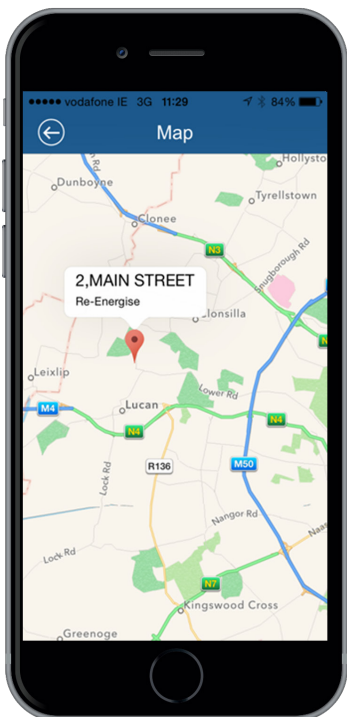
Benefits

- Gives field service workers a more modern and flexible app
- Leverages commodity hardware and standard mobile operating systems
- Potential to preserve portability between mobile operating systems
- Integrates with enterprise systems
- Delivers higher performance and offline functionality

feedback on what they wanted to see in the new MyWork app.

Users were also involved in field trials to assess the device type and cover. In addition, local implementation teams were set up to ensure users had a local point of contact to keep them fully informed, answer questions, and support users on the ground.

Training events were run nationally and delivered and supported by the local implementation team and project resources.

Next Steps

With this success, ESBN is setting up a mobile program to oversee the implementation of a suite of enterprise mobile apps for field technicians which include:

- Field timesheets integrating to SAP HR
- SAP asset inspection and maintenance work orders
- Planned switching and fault events integrating to an Oracle outage management system

Looking ahead, ESBN plans to work closely with Kony to meet their strategic objectives and transform their mobile experience.

Kony is the fastest-growing, cloud-based enterprise mobility solutions company and an industry leader among mobile application development platform (MADP) providers. Kony empowers today's leading organizations to compete in mobile time by rapidly delivering multi-edge mobile apps across the broadest array of devices and systems, today and in the future. Kony offers ready-to-run business mobile apps to help organizations better engage with customers and partners, as well as increase employee productivity through mobile device access to company systems and information. Powered by Kony's industry-leading Mobility Platform, enterprises can design, build, configure, and manage mobile apps across the entire software development lifecycle, and get to market faster with a lower total cost of ownership.

For three years in a row, Gartner has named Kony a Leader in its Magic Quadrant for Mobile Application Development Platforms. In addition, Kony was named a "Leader" and earned the highest score in the current offering category in Mobile Infrastructure Services by independent research firm Forrester Research, Inc., according to The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Infrastructure Services, Q3 2015 report. In addition to these recognitions, Kony was also honored in the Mobile Star Awards for achievements in enterprise application development; named the first place winner in CTIA's MobITs Awards in the Mobile Applications, Development & Platforms category, and included on the Inc. 500|5000 list of fastest growing private companies in America.

For more information, please visit www.kony.com. Connect with Kony on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
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