

# The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

**The Atlanta Journal-Constitution boosts sales force productivity by 30% while improving service for customers and advertisers**

## Industry

- Publishing

## Application

- Sales Force Automation and Customer Relationship Management

## Solution Highlights

- 30% productivity gain in door-to-door selling
- Application developed in-house, in less than eight weeks
- Integrated with mainframe-based circulation and customer service systems

*With customer subscription data on Palm handhelds, sales people now focus their door-to-door sales efforts on qualified prospects. Accurate data now allows management to better direct sales efforts, precisely measure sales performance and provide advertisers with valuable information.*

## About The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, a leading metropolitan newspaper, sells more than half a million papers daily to households and retail outlets. The company delivers up to five editions per day and also handles Atlanta area home distribution for *The New York Times* and *Investor's Business Daily*.

## The Challenge

Newspapers today face intense competition from many sources. While many people continue to enjoy the personalized experience of having a printed paper delivered at home, their expectations for timeliness and service are influenced by experiences on the Internet. Customers expect sales representatives—whether communicating by email or having a conversation on the door step—to be informed about the status of their account.

Yet until recently, door-to-door sales crews at the Atlanta Journal-Constitution didn't know whether they were knocking on the doors of nonsubscribers or subscribers taking the paper two, three, five or seven days a week. Lacking detailed household information, they were unable to concentrate their efforts on the best prospects and risked annoying current subscribers. The company needed a way to put information from mainframe-based circulation and customer service systems into the hands of its mobile salesforce.

*"Simplicity is the most critical issue. A lot of the people doing these jobs don't have strong technical skills, and they're under a lot of time pressure. It has to be one button, click and go."*

— Edward F. Baer, CIO



## The Palm Handheld Solution

The Journal-Constitution sales force improved productivity by 30% using Palm handhelds. Before beginning a door-to-door sales campaign, supervisors now download customer and prospect information onto Palm™ III handhelds. Sales people carry the handhelds as they work the neighborhood, making the appropriate offer at each door. By simply tapping an address from the list displayed on the handheld, sales people instantly know if the household is a current or lapsed subscriber and how many days it receives a paper. Handhelds also tell sales people which current promotions they can offer the customer and automatically calculate applicable sales tax for each of 16 counties.

At the end of the night, data from the handhelds is uploaded to the company's computing systems using Palm HotSync technology. Managers have precise data on who was visited and at what time, enabling them to measure sales force performance.

## Future Plans

Having successfully deployed handhelds to its mobile sales force, the Journal-Constitution is finding more ways to exploit the advantage. Adding real-time order entry to the sales force automation application is expected to yield even greater productivity benefits. The newspaper is also launching handheld applications for single copy sales and non-subscriber weekly

delivery, which will improve service accuracy and reliability while eliminating the time-consuming chores of manually calculating single copy draw, returns and bills, printing labels and manually sorting papers for select market coverage. Advertisers will benefit from the new capabilities too, as the Journal-Constitution will soon be able to provide them with data on exactly where and when non subscriber and insert packages were delivered.

## Competitive Advantage

By implementing mobile field sales applications on Palm OS® handhelds, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is delivering on its promise of superior service. The company is also demonstrating that in the age of global information networks, personalized door-to-door service can be valued not only for its neighborliness but for its efficiency.

More information about the use of Palm Powered™ handhelds for enterprise solutions is available at:

**[www.palm.com/enterprise/studies](http://www.palm.com/enterprise/studies).**

For more information about Atlanta Journal-Constitution, visit:

**[www.ajc.com](http://www.ajc.com).**

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