

US Foods Recoups 1.1 Million Staff Hours & \$800K Annually with NetMotion Mobility®

US Foods, one of the largest food distributors in the United States, employs a field team of 5,000 to meet with and serve customers in person. However, when these road warriors tried to submit purchase orders on their laptops at customer sites, their connections would often fail. With poor online access, they were also forced to carry hard copies of sales and product materials as a back-up. The company implemented Mobile Performance Management software NetMotion Mobility® to ensure reliable connections. This upgrade would recoup over a million staff hours and save nearly another million in pre-printed materials.

Fast, Friendly Service

US Foods serves a wide range of food-based businesses, from chain and family-owned restaurants and hotels to corporate cafeterias. But no matter the business, every order placed is urgent; kitchens need the right ingredients to keep dining guests happy. Armed with laptops, field sales reps play a primary role in submitting orders and providing in-stock and delivery dates for products. The company, however, noticed that instead of being placed throughout the day, orders would generally come all at once toward the end of the work day creating a huge backlog.

Daniel Corcoran, US Foods manager of client services followed up with sales reps who said dropped connections were causing their applications to shut down. The culprit, it turned out, was the company's poorly performing virtual private network (VPN). "This often meant lost work, and always resulted in the rep having to log back in to the VPN connection and restart the application — wasting valuable time," he adds.

Embarrassed sales staff were hand-writing orders to make do. And because they had to leave the field as much as one hour early to enter orders from home, US Foods lost 1.1 million hours of potential sales time with clients. The poor connectivity also had a negative impact on inventory management. "When reps were batching orders, they wouldn't know until they got home at the end of the day if we were out of something," explains Corcoran. That meant reps would have to phone customers — often as they were gearing up for a busy evening service — to let them know about unavailable products and try to smooth things over.

Looking for help, US Foods reached out to NetMotion to learn more about Mobility Mobile Performance Management software.



INDUSTRY:

Distribution

OBJECTIVES:

- Deliver access to existing applications without modification or customization
- Provide persistent connectivity to applications and data
- Offer a seamless solution that doesn't require users to continuously login or revert to hand-writing orders

SOLUTIONS:

- NetMotion Mobility
- SAP Afaria mobile device management solution

RESULTS:

- Applications stay connected through wireless roaming areas and coverage gaps
- Users easily access networks and applications without complex logins or configurations
- Recouped 1.1 million productive staff hours
- Saved \$800k on printed materials and distribution

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Daniel Corcoran | US Foods Manager

Cooking with Grease

Mobility’s superior ability to maintain continuous, reliable connections through challenging network and operational conditions was everything US Foods was looking for and more. Reps could stop worrying about no-coverage zones, dead spots, weak signal strength or roaming. They could connect once and be able to serve their customers without interruption.

Mobility was the perfect complement to the company’s Afaría mobile device management solution from SAP. Sales staff could now check stock levels in real-time in front of customers without having to make apologies for “computer issues” nor did they need to wait until the end of the day to place orders.

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In addition, NetMotion’s examination of US Foods’ information security and management policies found that employee equipment was often left vulnerable to malware for long periods of time. In-house IT staff only performed antivirus and operating system updates when the staff were in local offices, which wasn’t very often. Pairing Mobility with Afaría’s mobile device management capabilities, sales reps are now able to remotely update their laptops by leaving them on at night, closing a critical cybersecurity gap and protecting both the business and its customers. Meanwhile, the IT departments, through Mobility’s Policy Management module, are able to manage available bandwidth by restricting daytime activities to business-critical operations.

Trimming the Fat

Mobility’s resilient connectivity has given sales reps dependable access to the ordering application they need to give customers the best service possible. And without connectivity problems to worry about, reps are able to think more about their customers’ needs and new ways to serve them. Over a million hours more to be exact.

Moreover, US Foods discovered that with Mobility’s always-on connection, staff could reliably access promotional literature – such as marketing collateral and training documents – through Afaría. This eliminated the need to pre-print materials for their 5,000 sales reps, resulting in an \$800,000 per year cost savings. For US Foods, reliable connectivity meant a more productive sales team, happier customers and lower costs. A real recipe for success.