

## Battling Pests with the ELF PDA



### Overview

The pest control industry has changed dramatically, evolving from the antiquated perception of a technician armed with chemicals ready to do battle against bugs and rodents. Today's pest control technician is armed with technology that keeps him efficient and effective, and optimizes customer service.

In the Ohio Valley, Okolona Pest Control is the perfect example of a modern pest control operation. Okolona Pest Control is a multifaceted service company that offers pest control and pest damage repair. The company has roots reaching back to 1972 when it was founded. This third generation, family run operation has grown to over 84 employees that provides services to residential and commercial clients from Southern Indiana to Northern Kentucky. Okolona also services AIB inspected food processing facilities. AIB has strict standards for documentation and inspection to assure safe production of food products.

### The Challenge

When the company started, each technician carried a clip board with the necessary account paperwork and daily route. Notes and services performed were hand written and invoicing was manual. All the paper was brought back to the office for data entry. Changes in regulations increased the documentation requirements and, as the company grew, the amount of paper created and stored also increased.

The paper based system impacted customer service; if a technician encountered a situation that required extra time, the customers on his route would be delayed. There was no way to dynamically move account information between these operators or to add emergency service requests in a manual, paper based environment. As an enterprise with many workers in the field, Okolona needed to increase its efficiency. A system that provided for real-time coordination, scheduling, and information was needed.

### The Solution

“What we had before was extremely antiquated; it was the old Unix based green screen; it was not user friendly,” commented Office manager Cassandra Mills, a third generation manager that has seen the growth and evolution of the company and the industry. Okolona started running ServicePro software in 1996 and added Elf™ PDA's with Brother Pocketjet printers in 2011. Mills considers the ServicePro solution using the Elf PDA a significant improvement to their previous system. She stated, “we have 57 technicians each armed with a Elf PDA and a Brother PocketJet portable printer.” They

get the job done fast and accurately using this system.

Today each pest control technician has an electronic record of the day's work in the palm of their hand. Each service ticket along with client history is available for consultation and reference as the service is provided. The technology makes it easy for these operators to record their inspections throughout the visit. Bait traps placed in a facility are bar coded. While moving through a facility, the Elf PDA is used to read the bar code. All Elf PDA's have Datalogic patented Green Spot technology. A green spot is projected on the bar code, confirming good read feedback. In noisy food processing facilities, this feature helps assure accuracy. After reading the bar code, a tap of the touch screen lets the technician record the condition of the trap. ServicePro software records the activity and assures that all of the locations are properly recorded. When the service is complete, a Bluetooth connection between the Elf PDA and the PocketJet printer allows reports, invoices, and other documentation to be printed out.

## The Results

Mobility solutions provide benefits to the technician; they also help the enterprise operate more efficiently and increase customer service. Technology lets Okolona managers know what their field workers are doing daily and manage schedules if a service is more complicated than expected, moving assignments to other operators. Office efficiency has also increased. Mills notes "being able to use the PDA's, the printers, and ServicePro's Realtime Mobile software has cut down on the time the office staff has had to manually post tickets because the technicians are already doing it for them."

Customers also benefit. The ability to dynamically schedule in real time and push the information allows Okolona to set itself apart from the competition and maximizes the number of clients served. Emergency calls are handled dynamically; schedules are reviewed to find a technician that can provide the quickest service and wireless synchronization updates the information in the field. Today mobility solutions are not only for Fortune 500 companies with corporate budgets. Local family run operations can benefit from the increased efficiency and productivity that mobile computers from Datalogic offer.

Customer: Okolona Pest Control

Industry/Sub-industry: Services/Commercial Services

Application/Sub-application: Disinfecting and Pest Control Services

Country: USA

Datalogic Products: Elf PDA

Datalogic Partner: ServicePro

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