



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE



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Customer Profile

COUNTRY:

UK - REGIONAL

INDUSTRY:

PUBLIC SECTOR

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

A 200 STRONG SPECIAL CONSTABULARY TEAM WITHIN BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

A DISPERSED TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS WHO COME FROM ALL TYPE OF BACKGROUNDS WITH DIFFERENT WORK AND FAMILY DEMANDS WHO NEED ACCESS TO DUTY AND SHIFT INFORMATION AND TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR AVAILABILITY.

SOLUTION:

COBWEB'S HOSTED WINDOWS SHAREPOINT SERVICES, A TEAM WORKING AND COLLABORATION TOOL THAT GIVES SPECIAL CONSTABLES WITHIN THE FORCE REAL-TIME, ONLINE ACCESS TO CRUCIAL INFORMATION.

The Special Constabulary at Bedfordshire Police has enlisted Cobweb Solutions to cater for its communications and messaging needs.

The Constabulary has implemented Cobweb's Hosted Windows SharePoint Services, a team working and collaboration tool that gives special Constables within the force real-time, online access to crucial information. It also provides them with the functionality to update their availability for weekly duties and allows higher-ranking Special Officers to collaborate on important documents over the Internet. This new approach to working has helped the force to improve productivity and speed up the decision making process.

The Special Constabulary is a force of volunteers who receive training from their local police force to work with and offer support to regular (full-time) officers. The 200 Special Constables at Bedfordshire Police, who give at least four hours of their spare time a week, are a vital link between the regular police and the local community.

Volunteers within The Special Constabulary come from all walks of life and are often in full or part-time employment, education or bringing up a family. Co-ordinating the availability of so many volunteers located across the county, and sharing crucial information about duties, shift patterns and new procedures was becoming increasingly difficult for the Bedfordshire Police to manage.

Prior to the implementation of Cobweb's Hosted Windows SharePoint Services solution the only means of sharing key information amongst Special Constables was at pre-planned regular section meetings or via a group email address. Invariably some volunteers would not be able to make these meeting and there was no guarantee that the group emails were being received in a timely manner

The Specials Constabulary found it did not have in place an effective procedure to meet the frequent and urgent operational needs of the regular Bedfordshire Police force.



The Challenge



A request from the force might involve providing increased police presence in a high-crime area, perhaps due to a recent spate of car robberies.

Traditionally a cascade telephone system would be used, whereby each individual special would be contacted to find out their availability, but this was both time-consuming and expensive.

The Special Constabulary required a flexible method of communication that would enable it to reach all constables at the same time regardless of their disparate locations. The implementation of Cobweb's Hosted Windows SharePoint Services solution has provided The Special Constabulary with a direct communications channel to its Constables as well as improving the Constabulary's productivity and effectiveness in meeting the needs of the regular Bedfordshire Police force.

If an urgent operational request comes in, supervisors can simply arrange for an email alert to be sent to all Bedfordshire Police specials simultaneously.

Nigel Green comments: "Our Special Constables have all provided an email address on which they can most easily be reached.

“Cobweb Solutions provides Bedfordshire Police with vital link to Special Constabulary .”

The Solution

They might access this via a home PC, at work or even at an Internet café. This procedure takes a matter of minutes for us to execute, whereas before we'd spend hours calling our teams to see who would be available for duty at short notice. We've definitely observed a significant reduction in our phone bills since we began working with Cobweb Solutions, as well as this freeing up hours of my time each week."

Part of the nature of volunteering is that Special Constables might have more free time one week than another. With Cobweb's Hosted Windows SharePoint Services solution, Special Constables can simply access Bedfordshire

Police's new dedicated SharePoint web site with their own login and password and update their availability. Supervisors can then easily and quickly alter rosters accordingly and distribute a notification email, without making a series of lengthy telephone calls.

Predictability of cost through Cobweb's pay-as-you-go per user per month pricing system also allows for The Special Constabulary to keep its costs down in response to changing workforce numbers and structure.

“The system allows us to protect our information through security controls that that only allow the correct users to see the data that they should..”



The constabulary currently has 214 users, with a capacity of 250.

Security was also a huge concern for the Constabulary. Roger Wilshaw, a Bedfordshire Police Special Constable who instigated the implementation of Cobweb's Hosted WSS commented:

“Due to the confidential nature of the information being shared on the Bedfordshire Police SharePoint website, security was a key requirement. The system allows us to protect our information through security controls that that only allow the correct users to see the data that they should. Cobweb's commitment to security best practice standards such as ISO27001 provided us with real peace of mind that the integrity and security of our data was in good hands.”

He added: “As well as each Special Constable being given their own log in and password, higher-ranking Special Officers have additional access permissions and editing capabilities, which Cobweb tightly monitors on our behalf. If required, an officer or in some cases teams of police officers, can access the same report and

work together to alter documents and make comments online. This approach has resulted in a quicker and more informed decision making process.”

Other security features contained within the Cobweb Hosted Windows SharePoint Services solution includes comprehensive antivirus protection, daily data backups and secure access via SSL that removes the need for expensive and difficult to manage VPNs.

Cobweb's Hosted Windows SharePoint Services provides the Constabulary with the flexibility to store, share and retrieve reports, minutes and training documents in the form of Word, Excel and PowerPoint files. The Constabulary can also share localised results with the rest of the county in the form of photo or video clips, such as a recent recording of a successful operation taken from a helicopter.

Nigel Green concludes: “Cobweb's Hosted Windows SharePoint Services has provided us with an incredibly easy and quick method of sharing key information, procedures and training materials with our Special Constables, who each week give up their valuable spare time to support the Bedfordshire Police force and the local community.”



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