



Satellites Unlimited Chooses SAP® Afaria® to Better Manage Its Field Technicians' Tablets



Partner



Company

Satellites Unlimited Inc.

Headquarters

Birmingham, Alabama

Industry, products, and services

Telecommunications – systems installation and service

Web site

www.suidish.com

SAP® solutions

SAP® Afaria® rapid-deployment solution

Partner

Element Five Solutions
www.e5sol.com



Make existing mobile devices more productive

In rural Alabama, where most residents live far from telecommunications hubs, satellite dishes are a needed commodity for those who want to keep up on the news and enjoy their favorite TV programs. What would make prospects more likely to choose one supplier over another? For Satellites Unlimited Inc., the answer is customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth recommendations – and that requires **fast, efficient service.**

Satellites Unlimited is a leading provider of installation and service of satellite dishes and related products, headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama. As an exclusive service provider for Dish Network in selected U.S. states, the company is committed to providing the highest level of customer service in the highly competitive telecommunications industry, where service and quality are key differentiators.

Several years ago, Satellites Unlimited provided its 500 field service technicians with Samsung Galaxy tablets. Although the tablets allowed technicians to work remotely, the company soon discovered capacity constraints and faced the growing challenge of administering the tablets and enabling accessibility of the back-end systems. “We’ve been using the tablets for a long time, but we needed to make them more productive for our field technicians,” explains Dylan Stafford, network administrator. It became critical to find a single solution for managing devices and applications.

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In search of an enterprise mobility management solution

At Satellites Unlimited, each tablet was locked down at the network level and had a static IP address assigned individually. This meant all tablets had to be brought back to the corporate branch office and individually updated to make any changes. “When we first deployed the tablets, there wasn’t an end-to-end solution available. Everything was built clumsily. We didn’t have any management over tablets, so we had to touch every single one to install new functionality or updates,” says Stafford. The entire process of managing the tablets was too manual, time consuming, and inefficient.

The tablets also had capability constraints. During an installation, technicians were limited to accessing certain applications and Web sites that had been preinstalled or configured on the tablets to set up the routers and install the equipment. When tablets had not been preauthorized to access a specific

router to set up Web pages, the technicians had to use their mobile phones and VPN to connect back to the hardware within the data center. Or they had to use another tablet just to gain access. “Technicians were doing work-arounds just to get the job done, which was hampering productivity,” says Stafford. Anytime they had a work change order or needed assistance – such as when routers changed in the field – they had to call back to headquarters, which further delayed the installation process.

Technicians also required offline GPS capabilities, which were nonexistent with the current setup. To improve the productivity of field technicians and the customer experience, Satellites Unlimited required a single administrative console from which to centrally manage and secure mobile data, update and push applications, and gain access to tablets directly.



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SAP had it all

Stafford's team researched every mobile device management solution under the sun. "Most solutions had bits and pieces but not everything we needed. SAP had it all," he explains. When they discovered that Dish Network was relying on the SAP® Afaria® mobile device management solution, the team at Satellites Unlimited decided to take a closer look. They soon discovered that, if a requirement was not supported, they could use the robust application programming interfaces (APIs) in SAP Afaria to build their own functionality. They immediately contacted SAP partner Element Five Solutions for assistance.

Element Five Solutions demonstrated to Satellites Unlimited the power of SAP Afaria and how easily it could meet the company's business needs, and



500

Field service technicians

then they presented the new rapid-deployment methodology. With the rapid deployment of SAP Afaria, Satellites Unlimited would be able to set up a mobile infrastructure with an easy-to-consume solution that could be implemented with less effort at a lower cost, ready to go live within weeks. This approach would also streamline the collaboration process between the partner and customer. In October 2012, Satellites Unlimited became one of the first customers to take advantage of the SAP Afaria rapid-deployment solution.



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Rapid implementation process

As Satellites Unlimited began the implementation of SAP Afaria, the team realized that, before going live, the entire field service team should be using the same e-mail and chat applications. They decided to suspend the implementation of SAP Afaria until they could roll out Google Gmail and Google Chat company-wide. Had the time for this change been excluded, the actual implementation time for SAP Afaria would have been two weeks shorter.

After rolling out the new e-mail and chat applications, Satellites Unlimited resumed the implementation of SAP Afaria and enlisted the assistance of Element Five Solutions to pilot the mobile device management functionality with four field service technicians. Once this proved successful, they pushed out SAP Afaria to one of the 14 branch offices and enrolled 50 service technicians. This was the first time Satellites Unlimited was able to push out applications to technicians' tablets at the same time. The technicians immediately began using the apps in the field. Satellites Unlimited completed this first phase of going live in mid-December 2012 – only 10 weeks after the start of the implementation process. Stafford comments, "Element Five was a big help in getting everything set up the correct way."



10 weeks

For implementation



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Improved efficiencies

Technicians now use the Samsung Galaxy Tablet for all their tasks. The entire satellite installation process has been streamlined. Technicians are more productive, since they only have to use one device when they go out to an installation. They no longer find themselves on the phone or using another device, as they now can communicate all information about an installation through their tablets using

e-mail and chat applications. They especially enjoy the offline capabilities when they need to use the GPS application. The branch offices now use SAP Afaria to push out or update applications installed on the tablets, without the need to touch every single device manually. The company now manages the entire lifecycle through location-based services.

“With SAP Afaria, our technicians can access information easier and faster, which makes the core aspect of our business more productive.”

Dylan Stafford, Network Administrator, Satellites Unlimited Inc.



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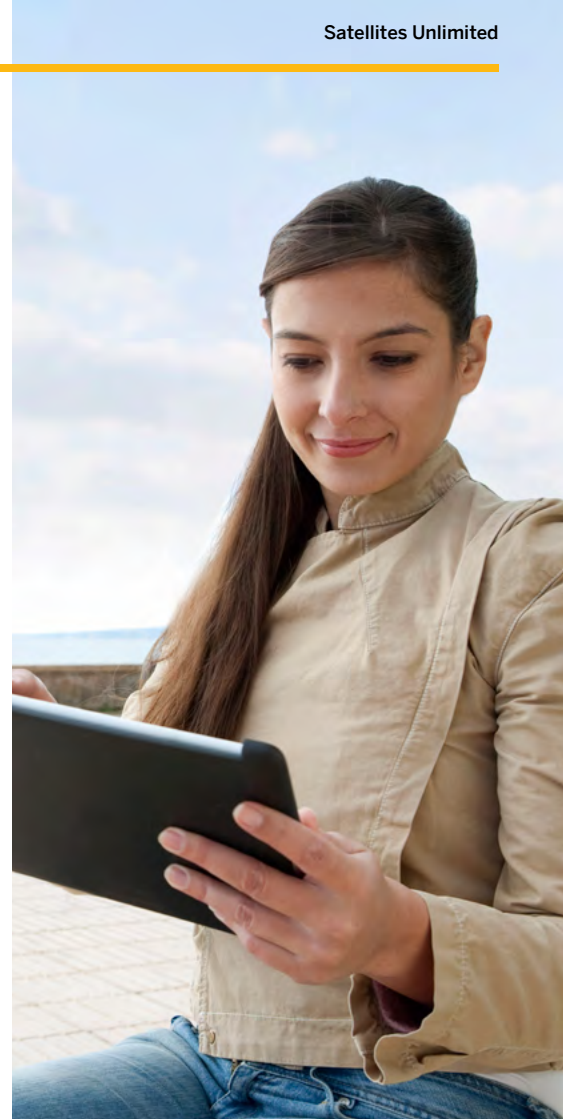
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Endless possibilities

Satellites Unlimited has seen the power of SAP Afaria and plans to enroll all 500 service technicians in the 14 branch offices by the end of 2013. The company may also extend new mobile apps to further improve customer services. SAP Afaria has many robust APIs, and the Satellites Unlimited team expects to extend their current capabilities. They have discussed setting up APIs to pull in location data so field service managers at the branch offices can locate and connect technicians to the nearest job. As they discover more apps that assist their technicians in the field, they will simply push them out to the tablets. For Satellites Unlimited, the rapid deployment of SAP Afaria was an effective and functional means of obtaining mobile device management services in just 10 weeks, with countless opportunities for further enhancement.



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