

DAEL ELIMINATES PAPER – STREAMLINES WORKFLOW

WITH MOBILE SERVICE MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY FROM MOTION COMPUTING AND KMP DESIGNS SOFTWARE



TECHNICIANS DURING AN INSTALLATION, SOLUTION IN HAND

Company **Dael Thermal**
Industry **Professional Services**
Country **Canada**
Website **daelthermal.com**



BACKGROUND

After 3 Decades, Mechanical Contractor Enters the Digital Age

Dael Thermal is a full-service mechanical contractor that has served commercial and industrial customers in the Greater Toronto Area since 1982. For Dael's 25 service mechanics, emergency service calls, which come around the clock, range from a building without heat to a food processing company without refrigeration to a bakery without working ovens. Servicing everything from boilers

in sub-basements to rooftop air-handling units, the field team needs the right information to isolate problems and initiate the repair process, rapidly secure the needed parts, and keep customers up to date. This requires teamwork and a smooth two-way flow of information between the service mechanics and the field support workers in the office.

CHALLENGE

Eliminate Productivity and Revenue Losses

Like the majority of companies in the industrial service sector, Dael was relying on paper-based systems to manage all of their business processes, including logging service calls, accessing service profiles, ordering parts, processing requisitions, gaining customer authorizations, and procuring service contracts. The primary communication between the technicians and their support team was by telephone – the office was fielding upwards of 225 calls a day from the field.

The paper / telephone process had all the usual frustrations, and this was taking a toll on productivity. Mechanics might wait on hold at supplier counters to get purchase order numbers from the office, or walk into tough after-hours situations without a service history of the equipment. It was often difficult to give customers timely information on repair status, and back in the office, staff members were spending much of their time firefighting.

All this was costing the company a significant amount of money. When paperwork got lost in a truck or left on the jobsite, it often meant that the company didn't get paid, and these added up. "Loss or misplacement of paperwork accounted for about 5 – 10% of our revenues," says Dael's service manager, Chris Stewart. "I would say this is typical for our type of business."

The administrative processes were labor-intensive and costly as well. "I had one administrator whose primary responsibility was verifying payroll timesheets, work orders and packing slips with invoices," says Stewart.

SOLUTION

A Complete Solution with No Downtime

Dael felt that the industry was starting to change, and saw a clear choice – go electronic or risk being left behind. Realizing that a partial solution would cause chaos, they began seeking a new solution that could cover every possible scenario in their business, in the field and in the office. "You have to jump into this with both feet, no questions at all," says Stewart.

BENEFITS

Estimated ROI

Four to Six Months

Financial Savings

Eliminated lost revenue from missing paperwork, which accounted for 10% of total sales

Improved Productivity

225 daily calls from the field substantially reduced, freeing office staff to spend more time dealing with clients

"I'd estimate that with the streamlining and added efficiency, the ROI would be between 4 and 6 months. And I think that would apply to most companies in our industry."

*Chris Stewart
– Service Manager, Dael Thermal*





Dael opted for a mobile service management suite called KMP, provided by Mississauga, Ontario-based software vendor KMP Designs Inc. The software allows users to execute all business functions, including call dispatch, work orders, time sheets, parts requisitions, and invoices, under a single intuitive interface. “I’ve been involved with two other software programs, and by far, KMP is the best,” says Stewart.

“KMP Designs and Motion Computing offer a comprehensive field service solution,” says KMP’s support specialist, Amanda Geerlinks. “Instead of using paper, technicians equipped with pen-based tablet technology from Motion are better able to assist customers at the point-of-service.” This is aligned with Dael’s strong customer service orientation.

The KMP platform, based on Microsoft’s Windows operating system, allows mechanics to work offline when internet connectivity is not available, and once online, sync back by a single keystroke. The environment is consistent for all users. “The tablet and the desktop are exactly the same,” says Geerlinks, “so it’s the same for the technician as it is for the office person – you don’t have to learn two different systems.” Mechanics can also access their email and other familiar programs on the device.

With Dael slated to become completely dependent on the new electronic system, they needed a tablet that would be available 100% of the time with no exceptions. “If I have a mechanic with a broken tablet, I have a mechanic who can’t work,” says Stewart.

To meet the uptime requirement, Dael equipped all of their mechanics with Motion F5 Tablet PCs provided by Austin-based Motion Computing. The units are engineered and tested to meet the toughest jobsite stresses, including extreme temperatures, impact, moisture, and exposure to dirt and grime. A hot-swappable battery means fresh power with no interruptions.

The F5 also includes special features ideal for a service environment. The large screen – viewable indoors or outdoors – makes it easy to display service documents to customers under any condition, and the comfortable stylus makes for easy

customer sign-off. On-board camera, bar-code reader, and radio interface mean the F5 is the only electronic device the mechanic needs.

RESULTS

Complete ROI in Four to Six Months

The solution has created a jump in productivity for Dael’s field and office personnel. “Now I can keep my guys moving, and keep them productive,” says Stewart. Lost revenue due to missing paperwork has disappeared, and cash flow is dramatically improved – it no longer takes four weeks to invoice a customer. “I used to have to carry the labor burden for all that time,” says Stewart. “Now, when I come in every morning, I go through my closed work orders, and I just start billing them. Next day.”

Mechanics arrive at jobsites with all the supporting information, and are often able to recommend courses of action to the customer. These often lead to new service contracts and added revenue.

“This makes us more impressive to the customer,” says Stewart, who notes that Dael recently bid on a service contract that required electronic service management capabilities – something that they would have been shut out of in the past.

All this has made for a rapid ROI. “I’d estimate that with the streamlining and added efficiency, the ROI would be between four and six months. And I think that would apply to most companies in our industry.”

With service mechanics and office workers focusing more in new revenue opportunities, Stewart is confident that the business will grow. Dael plans to build on this success by rolling out the solution to the company’s 10 installation mechanics.