GKN TAKES CONTROL OF ENTERPRISE MOBILITY TO CREATE A DYNAMIC GLOBAL WORKFORCE

GKN Group is an engineering giant with customers and production facilities worldwide. To create flexible, dynamic working, it wants to enable mobile working across its sales, design, and customer-facing operations. By consolidating Enterprise Mobility Management on VMware Workspace ONE™ Powered by AirWatch® Technology, the group can secure a range of devices and ensure consistent delivery of business-critical applications. So far, this has reduced cost, simplified management and improved the end-user experience.

GKN Group is a global engineering business, working across the automotive and aerospace sectors. Its products can be found in 90% of the world’s aircraft and engine manufacturers, and 90% of car manufacturers, meaning that GKN technology has featured on more than nine billion vehicles around the world. The group has more than 59,000 employees in over 30 countries, with sales of £10.4 billion, and more than 160 manufacturing facilities, service centres and offices.

Challenge

Any time you travel by road or air, there’s a good chance that GKN technology is helping you along the way. The GKN global engineering companies have a pervasive presence across the automotive and aerospace sectors.

GKN Automotive is an essential component of a global supply chain. In October 2018, three-quarters of all premium cars debuted at the Paris Motor Show, and 50% of the 80 million new cars sold last year, contained GKN Automotive’s technology.

The challenge for the business is to coordinate a collection of sales, design and manufacturing facilities across the world. It needs to continue to drive product innovation while managing a ‘Just in Time’ supply chain process.

Enterprise mobility is key. Around the world, GKN Automotive employees regularly work using laptops, tablets and smartphones. Teams work across customer, manufacturing and office sites. The business sends, shares and works from a wealth of up-to-the-minute corporate data.

“Our Intellectual Property, the way we work with highly sensitive customers, the fact we work in parts of the world with varying degrees of data regulation... all of this means we need a firm control of our mobile usage,” says Dirk Hofmann, IT manager, GKN Automotive. “But we don’t want this control to get in the way of employees using their mobile devices.”

The various GKN companies had multiple devices and MDM solutions across different parts of the business. Some divisions lacked any MDM. To simplify and standardize mobility management, Hofmann says the decision was made to create a single enterprise-wide solution.
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IT MANAGER
GKN AUTOMOTIVE

VMWARE FOOTPRINT
• VMware Workspace ONE™ Powered by AirWatch® Technology

Action
GKN has worked with VMware for a number of years, says Hofmann. It was a natural step to consider VMware Workspace ONE, as its Enterprise Mobility Management platform.

“The key feature of any solution is the ability to work across a mixed estate of iOS, Android, BlackBerry and Windows mobile devices,” he says. “We also use special scanners in the warehouses to scan parts and boxes. Every device, every operating system, needs to be covered by one platform.”

Secondly, the solution would need to integrate with Windows 10, an upcoming companywide project. “At the time, very few providers could offer this,” says Hofmann, “only VMware could with Workspace ONE and the level of support was exceptional – the planning, the technical help, the troubleshooting, issue resolution. We never had the feeling we were lost. It was a very professional service.”

Impact
For Hofmann, the priority was to deliver immediate improvements to user experience. His team tested the Workspace ONE Tunnel feature with a pilot group of 50, with plans to roll-out to 5,000 users across the business by the end of October 2018. This will simplify access to applications, reducing time and boosting productivity.

“We used to use a different MDM product that caused real issues with email loading speeds,” he says. “It could take 30 seconds for the mail application to load on a phone, and then users would have to switch to the VPN on their laptop to complete a transaction – review a contract, or design details for instance.”

“It was an interrupted experience. Now, users are straight through to the applications they need, on their mobile.”

The feedback from senior management has been excellent, says Hofmann: “They don’t notice that we have a new enterprise mobility platform, they just have immediate access to the apps they need, without providing access via native VPN profiles. There is no handbrake on the business.”

Looking Ahead
Hofmann says the plan is for Workspace ONE to be fully deployed across the entire Automotive business. In project terms, his current focus is making sure all employees are working from Windows 10 by the end of 2018. Windows 10 modern management will then integrate with Workspace ONE in the early part of 2019.

“Windows 10 is in line with our broader strategy of a greater use of cloud applications,” he says. “Workspace ONE will make it easier for us to manage, and users to access, those applications. What I want is for users to all have the same view, and the same experience, of applications wherever they are, and whatever device they’re on.”

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