



Meridian Connections



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The Productivity and Profit Gains of Wireless Communication

The logic of adding wireless communication to Prolog® or Proliance® by Meridian Systems is straight forward and obvious: project management software users would achieve real-time communication in the field that would allow them to closely manage activities without the need for phone conversations or paper forms.

Simple logic aside, what are the measurable benefits of extending Prolog or Proliance to workers on-site and on-the-move? Can wireless communication save money and improve productivity?

Why Go Wireless

For those with a bottom-line sensibility, the purpose of enabling wireless access in the field is twofold:

- To eliminate manual processes that require paper, fax, and e-mail correspondence, and
- To allow real-time data entry from the field, which would eliminate time-consuming, costly, error-prone, and time-delayed manual data entry at the office

By implementing wireless capability, such as that offered by Meridian Systems' strategic partner JumpStart Wireless, project supervisors and field technicians can use handheld devices to receive and update project information and schedules in real time – wherever they are located.

Wireless capability enhances the ability to control scale, complexity, and precision in large organizations. This means that Meridian customers can better manage their collective businesses from a central database to achieve lower cost and greater productivity for a workforce of hundreds or even thousands of individuals.

How Wireless Works

Wireless applications can be customized to accommodate the unique forms and business processes of specific customers, including the ability to maintain a local data store of past, present and future work orders on handheld devices such as Motorola Smart Phones and BlackBerry handhelds

Applications that are conducive to wireless access include work orders, site reports, punchlists, RFIs, and quality assurance inspections. The projects and tasks that are assigned to field supervisors and employees appear as listings that can be sorted many different ways, such as

float, home ID, finish date, and so forth. Wireless users may have as many as 40 projects on their devices that are continuously updated from Prolog or Proliance. And each project may have 20 or more activities. This means that on a given handheld device, the user may be tracking and updating as many as 800 activities.

Features that can be incorporated into wireless applications include data-driven forms using values from Meridian databases (one story vs. two stories, single family vs. multi-family), math functions to process values entered into the mobile device (summation, averaging), and links to the handheld address book to allow e-mail or faxing of alerts and notifications from remote locations.

By extending the power of Meridian Systems software to the entire firm – office and field – customers are able to expedite projects with a reduced number of supervisors, increase the volume of activities executed by a given number of staff, and react more quickly to delays identified in the field.

Savings and Benefits

As you might conclude, wireless capability added to Meridian software applications generates a substantial return on investment.

Specific savings and benefits include:

- Dispersed data collection and availability, which generates productivity in the field *and* the office by eliminating manual data entry and unnecessary voice communication
- Field staff that receive (and submit) more accurate and detailed information
- Quantifiable and tangible savings totaling at least 15,000 man hours and \$360,000 per year with a workforce of 100 mobile employees
- For the same sized company, office staff savings in excess of \$150,000 that can be directly attributed to field personnel using wireless applications
- Reduction in theft and materials shrinkage by more timely materials delivery; work-in-process inventory is ordered as needed rather than weeks in advance
- A single handheld device that can be used for voice, e-mail, and wireless data applications, increasing its cost efficiency
- Timely notification of project and task completion that allows employees down the line to complete their documents or workflow tasks more quickly, thereby improving responsiveness throughout the entire organization
- The ability of managers to focus on supervision and planning rather than data entry, which speeds the critical decision making needed to circumvent delays and barriers to on-time completion
- A decrease in carrying costs for projects that are bank financed or depend on progress payments
- User-generated information that feeds detailed reporting and analysis from Prolog or Proliance software, enhancing its value to Meridian customers

In general, the wireless applications described here generate savings in excess of \$300 per mobile worker per month and wireless deployments pay for themselves in five to six months.

Hallmarks of Industrial Strength Wireless Applications

A wireless application implemented by a Meridian customer must incorporate certain basic

principles in order to be successfully deployed in the field and readily accepted by mobile employees.

Wireless capability “musts” include:

- Rich connectivity to the customer’s Meridian software system to ensure that updates from the field are available to management within minutes
- Disconnected operation that allows field staff to continue working even if they are out of range of the wireless carrier or working from inaccessible locations like furnace rooms
- A focus on forms and information communicated to and from a central database rather than a “miniaturized Windows” application that is not process oriented
- Highly-tailored applications that can be readily modified as business requirements change
- The ability to provide multiple applications on the same device, such as project management, time sheets, *and* materials management
- Real-time, always-on capability, rather than end-of-day synchronization, that allows managers to accelerate business processes, complete projects faster, and gain a competitive advantage

Making Prolog or Proliance a wireless, real-time software solution by utilizing a platform such as JumpStart’s BusinessSuite allows Meridian’s customers to extend vital productivity information throughout the organization. Processing data across the entire company in real time means that more of the firm will come to rely on – and profit from – the project management data, document processing, scheduling, and analytics provided by its Meridian Systems software.

For further information on JumpStart Wireless solutions, call (561) 243 4700 x 108 or go to www.jumpstartwireless.com.

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[To Top ▲](#)