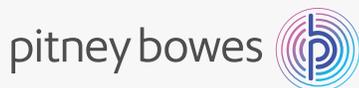


CASE STUDY

Pitney Bowes



Global postal services giant

Highlights

Requirements

- Rock-solid security from the device to the cloud
- Scalability to support the hundreds of thousands of mailstation meters deployed worldwide
- Fast time-to-market before carriers drop analog lines

Solution

- Retrofit mailstation meters with Wi-Fi/Ethernet adapters which incorporate Electric Imp connectivity modules for security
- Electric Imp Platform processes data from SmartLink adapters and delivers it securely to the Pitney Bowes Commerce Cloud

Benefits

- Substantial reduction in costly service calls
- Dramatic growth in ink sales
- Increase in lease renewals
- Customer ROI achieved in just 45 days

Company Overview

Businesses of all sizes the world over have relied on Pitney Bowes postage meters for nearly a century. The \$3.5 billion technology giant has a long history of innovation and of using new technologies to provide its customers with new and improved solutions.



Challenge

Pitney Bowes faced a major challenge when telecommunications carriers worldwide signaled they would phase out their analog phone lines. The company needed a new way to connect hundreds of thousands of its popular mailstation postage meters that used dial-up modems to download postage.

They required a connectivity solution with rock-solid security, the scalability to support all the meters in the field, and easy installation for clients. In addition to these demanding technical requirements, it also had to be created and deployed quickly before the carriers eliminated their analog lines.

After building and testing a Raspberry Pi-based prototype, Pitney Bowes determined that IoT was the best solution and decided to retrofit the meters with Wi-Fi/Ethernet adapters. The testing indicated that Raspberry Pi could not scale to support hundreds of thousands of meters, nor meet their stringent security requirements.

The company's challenge was now finding an IoT solution that met all their technical and time-to-market requirements.





With Electric Imp, we were able to provide a more robust connectivity solution that was easy to install and had a lower cost.”

– Rick Ryan, Pitney Bowes Fellow



Being able to plug something into our devices that doesn't require us to change them – and is highly secure – is absolutely essential.”

– Rick Ryan, Pitney Bowes Fellow

Solution

Pitney Bowes worked with Electric Imp to create the SmartLink adapter that enables its mailstation postage meters to securely connect to the Pitney Bowes Commerce Cloud via Wi-Fi or Ethernet.

Customers simply plug the SmartLink into the mailstation's USB port. Once connected, the meters automatically download postal rate updates while integrated cloud services monitor ink and prepaid postage levels; alerting customers when levels are low. The SmartLink also transmits diagnostic data to the cloud so customers and Pitney Bowes service technicians can respond to error notifications in real time.

The “always on” connection also eliminated the need for many customers to move mailstations from their work area to the nearest analog line to download updates postage rates and buy postage.

The SmartLink adapters have proven so successful that Pitney Bowes has made them available for customers using mailstation2, DM125, DM225, DM300 and DM400 model meters.

Benefits



REDUCED SERVICE COSTS

Connecting the meters allows Pitney Bowes service personnel to see error codes as they are generated, enabling many issues to be remotely diagnosed and resolved – such as when a customer presses a wrong button. This has reduced costly service calls substantially.



NEW SERVICE REVENUES

Pitney Bowes has taken advantage of real-time monitoring to market their ink to customers when seeing that their mailstations have run low on ink. This auto replenishment capability has dramatically increased the company's ink sales and reduced the number of meters damaged by inferior generic inks.



HIGHER CUSTOMER RETENTION

Pitney Bowes has seen customer retention rates increase as users value the greater uptime enabled by remote diagnostics and automatic ink replenishment. They also appreciate not having to move the meters, sometimes monthly, thanks to SmartLink's “always on” connection.



INCREASED PROFITABILITY

The superior customer experience enabled by SmartLink has noticeably increased the rate of lease renewals. Renewing mailstation customers for leases of 3, 5 or 7 years increases revenues.

Why Electric Imp?

The key reasons Pitney Bowes chose Electric Imp to provide the secure IoT connectivity for its SmartLink solution include:

- **Time-to-Market:** The Electric Imp IoT Connectivity Platform enabled Pitney Bowes to quickly develop and deploy SmartLink before carriers eliminated their analog lines
- **Security:** The comprehensive security features of the Electric Imp Platform and the imp modules ensure a secure connection from the meters to the Pitney Bowes Commerce Cloud
- **Scalability:** The Electric Imp Platform easily supported the hundreds of thousands of mailstation meters worldwide
- **Focus and Risk:** The Electric Imp Platform allowed Pitney Bowes to focus on its world-class mailing equipment and not worry about maintaining a complex IoT infrastructure over time
- **Cost:** By using the commercially proven Electric Imp Platform – which supports millions of devices – Pitney Bowes avoided the immense cost of developing and maintaining a solution throughout the long IoT lifecycle

