



FIELD FORCE MANAGER CUSTOMER CASE STUDY: BELFOR USA

Belfor USA is part of Belfor Holdings, the world's largest disaster restoration company, and is the premier provider of property recovery services in North America. With 48 offices throughout the country and more than 1,500 restoration specialists on its team, Belfor USA can respond immediately with experienced manpower and specialized equipment to quickly stabilize any disaster scene. In addition to property restoration after a disaster, the company also provides data and document recovery and restoration of machinery and electronics.

Objective.

Belfor's office in Tucker, Georgia, was looking for ways to track the activities and hours of its estimators, construction crews, and production workers who travel from state to state as needed. Administrator Val Goble said that her company has had crews working on commercial property restoration in areas hit hard in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina, such as Ocean Springs, Mississippi, and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

"We had an 'honor system' for getting on-site and activity information from our employees. They were required to call the office to give us their status and location information, but most do not have time to do so," Goble said.

"Our only way of trying to get employee accountability was to match up this self-provided information against the monthly phone bills. And that still didn't give us a way of determining whether employees were claiming more hours than they actually put in."

Belfor also had phone-service issues; its provider was charging more than administrators were comfortable with, especially in light of the fact that the provider's coverage capabilities were not robust enough for Belfor's needs.

Solution.

Verizon Wireless was able to provide the thorough phone coverage Belfor needed, so the company made the switch. The company then learned about Verizon Wireless Field Force Manager from a sales rep who explained the benefits and features of the mobile workforce management software solution. The solution would resolve multiple concerns for the company, so Belfor signed up to install it on the handheld devices of 17 initial users.

"Field Force Manager's Web-based and wireless functions let us know exactly where each of our workers is at any given time, and exactly when they get to their assigned locations," Goble said. "It makes it a lot easier to direct our field operations; if we need to locate and contact workers to send them from one site to another, or need to let clients or other Belfor personnel know the travel status or ETA of workers, Field Force Manager does it."

Belfor's employees use Field Force Manager's time-capture function to record when they go on and off duty. The company compares that captured information with the employees' paper time and activity sheets. "Using Field Force Manager to double-check the accuracy of claimed work hours has really cut down on 'padding' problems," Goble said.

BELFOR USA

Company Description:

Belfor USA is part of Belfor Holdings, the world's largest disaster restoration company, and is the premier provider of property recovery services in North America. Its services include property restoration after a disaster, data and document recovery, and restoration of electronics and machinery. The company has 48 offices from coast to coast and 1,500 full-time restoration specialists.


Objective:

- Switch to a wireless network that could provide robust coverage throughout the United States.
- Ensure employees are recording real time worked and decrease likelihood of padding hours.
- Give administrators visibility into the daily activities of mobile workers throughout the country.
- Improve safe driving practices among employees and limit excessive speeding.

Solution:

- Belfor switched to America's most reliable network, Verizon Wireless.
- Field Force Manager was installed on mobile employees' handheld devices.
- The solution enabled administrators to verify reported work hours with actual time logged into the Field Force Manager system.
- Employees received warnings from the system—and then from administrators—about speeding while driving.

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Goble said the Field Force Manager-enabled phones were a little intimidating for some workers at first, mostly because their comfort level with technology tended to be lower. But she noted that employees have adjusted very well over time, and that overall, they have found the solution very easy to use.

The company uses the system's speed-monitoring function to improve the safety of its vehicle operations. The system alerts both the driver and the office when speeding is detected. "If the driver doesn't slow down when alerted, the office contacts the driver to issue a friendly 'reminder.' Because we also get a record of all speeding events and can connect them to individual drivers, we can take more extreme action as necessary. And if we get a call from a concerned citizen claiming that one of our trucks is being operated in an unsafe way, we'll know which truck it is and who's doing the driving," Goble said.

Results.

Belfor administrators report that the Field Force Manager solution has been a success in multiple ways.

As a result of Belfor's initial pilot of 17 users, the company figures that Field Force Manager is already saving the company more than \$1,000 per month on labor costs alone. "The main reason Belfor's Tucker office implemented Field Force Manager is to help keep everybody honest. The system has met this objective very well, and that alone justifies its cost," Goble noted.

Goble said sales representatives from Verizon Wireless have provided very good support throughout the implementation and since its completion, and that Field Force Manager has run very smoothly. She also noted that now that Belfor has been using Field Force Manager for about a year, the company is considering implementing some of the system's other features, such as electronic timecards.

Because Verizon Wireless provided robust network coverage and Field Force Manager, the mobile workforce management solution, Belfor has been able to decrease the amount of "padding" on employee timecards and has realized significant monthly savings in labor costs alone. The company has also enjoyed increased driving safety among mobile workers because the solution provides visibility into daily operations.

Results:

- Belfor has realized a savings of at least \$1,000 per month in labor costs, due to stricter control over how employees record their time.
- Administrators are better able to direct field activities from the office by tracking locations and travel time.
- Employees are more careful about excessive speeding, so they are safer on the road.
- The company is considering taking advantage of other solution features, such as electronic timecards—which will result in less paperwork around the office.

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*—Val Goble, Administrator
Belfor USA*

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