

From Concept to Reality

Braintree Electric Light Department Implements Outage Management System



Braintree Electric Light Department

BELD supplies electric, Internet and cable television services to the township of Braintree, Massachusetts. BELD was founded by Thomas Watson and is one of the oldest departments in the United States.



"The whole team at mPower was great to work with, especially Chris Gountanis, the lead Software Engineer we worked with on the project. Chris was super responsive to my requests and very open to ideas we had for refining the system. I was very impressed by how rapidly our ideas became reality".

Rob Forde
Electrical
Operations
Supervisor
BELD

The Challenge

Rob Forde, Electric Operations Supervisor for Braintree Electric Light Department, was asked by upper management to investigate an Outage Management System that would tie into their existing GIS system. "I saw some marketing material from mPower that described how their browser-based mapping software, mPower Integrator, can easily link to multiple data bases and systems, so I decided to attend one of their webcasts".

Intrigued by the Possibilities

While attending his first mPower webcast, Mr. Forde was impressed with Integrator's overall ease of use, powerful reporting capabilities and built in network trace flow capability. "I thought it would be great if they could add some Call Capture and Response Management components, providing the ability to easily gather key outage information from the customer and an interactive "dashboard" to track and coordinate our outage response efforts".

Forde expressed his vision for expanding the system's capabilities to mPower personnel during a follow-up demonstration—and mPower quickly shared his enthusiasm for exploring the concepts further. "When Rob articulated his ideas for how we could take our current applications to another level and create a fully -integrated GIS/Outage Management System, I was intrigued and decided we should take a hard look at committing some R&D to pursue this", said Greg Calcarì, President, mPower Innovations.

Drawing on industry expertise

Mr. Forde introduced mPower to Pete Dion, General Manager of Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light, a past colleague of his who had been directly involved in the development of similar software applications for a large, investor-owned utility. “The opportunity to combine Rob’s ideas with input from somebody who had direct experience in a prior software co-development effort prompted me to catch the next plane to Boston”, states Mr. Calcari.

Moving Forward

Key personnel from mPower and BELD met at Mr. Dion’s office in December, 2009 to hammer out a framework for the new mPower Outage Management System. mPower began development of the system in January 2010 and internal testing took place in March. In April, BELD confirmed their decision to be the first beta site for the product.

“Initially, management was a little concerned about sailing into somewhat uncharted waters. But, once we saw the beta software and mPower’s clear commitment

to deliver on their promise, we were confident the project was going to be a success. Within a few days of installation, we were up and running on the OMS software. Our internal call center and engineering personnel love the system. Having the ability to give access over the web to our external call service was also a real bonus” States Mr. Forde.

Key Features and Benefits

Fully Browser-Based

Easy, Intuitive Interface

Direct Link to CIS System

Visual Trace Flow Analysis

Automated Outage Reports

Tapping the power of Integrator

With the success of the OMS development and deployment, BELD decided to move forward with the implementation of mPower’s Integrator software, the company’s flagship GIS-based asset management system. Integrator’s advanced query building and reporting tools allow them to more easily streamline the optimization of their asset data. In addition, the ability to easily sort, search and report on historical outage data, helps the organization plan and prioritize future asset management and maintenance efforts, saving time and money in the long run. States, Mr. Forde, “With both applications in place for only a month or so, we’re already seeing the payback and we’re just beginning to tap into the long term payoff”.

The ability to define a standard list of questions for an outage call allows BELD to gather key data rapidly from customers, increasing efficiency in outage response