FUJITSU

Case Study
Richardson Police Department

»Not only did the RFID technology make us more efficient in terms of finding and keeping records of our equipment, but it also transformed the way that we purchase, receive and issue equipment. We found much smoother ways of processing these things so that we can do a better job.«

Jim Spivey, Police Chief, Richardson Police Department, Texas

The customer

Country: United States
Industry: Law Enforcement
Employees: 252
Website: www.cor.net

The challenge

With increasing demands for security and accountability, Richardson Police Department wanted to find a more efficient way of tracking and logging its uniforms, weapons, vehicles and other sensitive items.

The solution

It turned to local RFID specialist Fujitsu GlobeRanger to provide an array of suitable tags and software to ensure seamless visibility of its inventory.

The customer

For over 50 years, Richardson Police Department has been providing services to citizens in trouble, emergency responders in the field, and other public safety agencies. It serves a city of just over 100,000 people and is amongst the largest of 20 police departments in Texas with 156 sworn officers.

The challenge

Richardson PD manages a vast array of inventory, including 50 emergency response vehicles, 39 patrol cars, weapons, swat armor and radar units. In the wake of the terrorist attack on the twin towers in 2001, it had serious concerns about how these assets could best be kept secure.

"We have all the equipment you could imagine with radar units and everything else that comes with a police car. And with 156 officers we have quite a bit of uniform inventory and equipment that we issue," explains Jim Spivey, Police Chief, Richardson PD. "9/11 taught us some serious lessons. It made us think differently about the security of our equipment and the sensitivity of all of these weapons and badges. It made us really think more about how do we keep the security intact?"

This concern for security was accompanied by a new era of government accountability meaning local police departments were required to become more transparent about budgets. In order to accurately keep track of its own inventory, and thus how much money had been spent, Richardson PD manually checked all items on a yearly basis.

"We need to be accountable to taxpayers about how we use their hard earned money. However that accountability involved a very manual process. We physically went around the department once a year and counted everything to make sure that it's still where it's supposed to be," adds Spivey. "We spent months trying to count this equipment. To say that it's inefficient is an understatement."

The department suspected there must be a more efficient and effective way to track its inventory that wouldn't compromise security. Recent developments in RFID technology pointed to a potential solution, leading the organization to design a system and issue an RFP.

"We put out feelers and found some experts in this field that helped us design a system that could help manage our inventory and our sensitive property," continues Spivey. "Knowing then that we had the potential to do something with this, we put out a request for proposals."

The benefit
■ Patrol cars can be checked out 15 minutes faster which, across the force, is equivalent to one extra officer on the streets ■ The system is significantly more efficient, enabling real-time visibility of items and removing the need for an annual audit that would take months ■ It makes dangerous weapons more secure and provides public accountability for taxpayer spend ■ It has the potential to track evidence and thus increase the likelihood of successful public prosecutions

Products and services
■ Fujitsu GlobeRanger

The solution

One of the companies invited to tender was GlobeRanger, a Fujitsu company, that provides RFID software and solutions which enable companies to harness data that is generated outside traditional IT environments.

"GlobeRanger was the only company that owns its software and offered a solution that would work for us. Furthermore, its experience with the Department of Defense assured us that we could depend on it," says Spivey. "GlobeRanger helped us wade through this whole idea of how to deploy RFID in a police department. We found out there were tags for every kind of equipment you can imagine."

GlobeRanger iMotion Edgeware simplifies the development, deployment, and management of these RFID, mobile, and sensor-based tags. It seamlessly integrates existing and new technologies such as bar code, RFID, wireless and sensor-based systems while preserving past investments. Richardson PD soon realized that one tag would not fit all its requirements and selected six different tags to ensure its entire inventory was covered. These ranged from laundry tags for uniforms to weapon tags and sensitive vehicle security tags.

"We all have an ID card to access the system, scan our name and scan the uniform item that we're going to be issued," comments Spivey. "That system automatically updates our records and makes sure that we know who has what, how many they have, how long they've had it and when they're ready for a change-out."

The benefit

The new GlobeRanger platform has transformed how Richardson PD operates, making it more effective and giving visibility of every part of the inventory. This in turn provides public transparency and reduces the possibility of weapons or badges ending up in the wrong hands.

"Not only did the RFID technology make us more efficient in terms of finding and keeping records of our equipment, but it also transformed the way that we purchase, receive and issue equipment," says Spivey. "And we found much smoother ways of processing these things so that we can do a better job."

As a result, officers are now able to inventory their cars and get on the street 15 minutes faster, which equates overall to one extra officer on patrol, courtesy of the GlobeRanger technology. It also maximizes accountability and security while ensuring that every piece of equipment can be tracked around the clock.

Conclusion

Having started with uniforms and then added equipment to the RFID platform, Richardson PD is now looking at other areas where it might serve a purpose for the common good.

"I hope that we're able to move this into the future by better managing our evidence," concludes Spivey. "It has to be precise but I'm convinced now, having experience with GlobeRanger, that we'll be able to use this technology to manage our evidence and have even more solid prosecutions in the future."

"I really appreciate what GlobeRanger has done for us and I'm sure this is something that a lot of police departments could use."
Jim Spivey, Police Chief, Richardson Police Department, Texas

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2015-09-11