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Robert Hutchinson
Customer Service Manager
Audatex

Audatex equips its customers with 1,500 FUJITSU Tablet STYLISTIC R727 devices with custom-made casing for robust and high-performing operation in the field.

At a glance

Country: South Africa
Industry: Automotive / Technology
Founded: 1966
Website: audatex.co.za

Challenge

Audatex needs to lease its customers a reliable, sleek and high-spec device that can handle its own bespoke software and function as a standalone PC. This device must be able to withstand the rigors of operating in dusty and hazardous environments.

Solution

The company has deployed 1,500 FUJITSU Tablet STYLISTIC R727 devices, complete with customized casing from Mobilis, that offer long battery life, great design, rugged performance and flexible operation.

Benefit

- Customized Mobilis casing can withstand shocks and drops, preventing screen damage
- Single battery charge lasts one full day for on the road productivity
- Local Fujitsu support delivers on-site next-day service for optimal uptime
- Top of the range security features provide peace of mind

Customer

Audatex connects insurers, body shops, vehicle manufacturers, accident management companies, fleet managers, dealers, parts suppliers, salvage agents and many other parties in the supply chain. Its solutions and services automate the motor claims and repair process from first notification right through to final settlement. Audatex South Africa serves the Southern African market through a dedicated and talented team of sales, training, technical and customer service professionals.

Products and Services

■ FUJITSU Tablet STYLISTIC R727



Equipping automotive professionals in the field

Audatex's primary service is to assist the automotive and insurance industries in quantifying vehicular damage. Traditionally, this was a paper-based process – time-consuming and prone to human error. Then, in the 1980s, the company began developing software to digitize the process; by the end of the 1990s that software had evolved to the point that a portable solution was viable.

"Fujitsu was involved in our digital transformation from the outset, providing robust, high-performing devices to help us capture damage information in the field and calculate costs," explains Robert Hutchinson, Customer Service Manager, Audatex. "Since those early days, we have experimented with several other vendors but have always found ourselves coming back to Fujitsu due to the outstanding build quality and support."

For Audatex, the challenge is in finding a high-powered, exclusive tablet that its clients cannot simply buy for themselves, because its business model depends on renting the devices. This tablet must run its own custom software and also function as an all-round office PC. Furthermore, it has to be able to function in the dusty and hazardous environs of mechanic workshops, auto repair stores and out in the field.

"Our software is demanding so we need a high-spec machine that can handle it smoothly as well as delivering standard office tools for our clients who now use it as their sole all-in-one device," adds Hutchinson. "We also need dependable local support – some vendors have no representation in South Africa, so any faulty devices need to be shipped to the UK and returned three months later, which is clearly not an efficient way for us to run our business."

Stylish, robust and well-supported

After dabbling with alternative, unreliable vendors, Audatex returned to the Fujitsu fold and is currently supplying its customers with the FUJITSU Tablet STYLISTIC R727, which transforms into a full performance notebook by attaching the strong yet slim magnetic keyboard. Its magnesium-aluminum housing delivers durability for Audatex customers on the move, while enterprise-grade connectivity, manageability and security features deliver confidence.

"We last evaluated the market a year ago and the Fujitsu STYLISTIC R727 came out on top – it really has the 'wow' factor our clients have come to expect, while also addressing growing security concerns, which are important when handling sensitive insurance data," continues Hutchinson. "Our biggest customers gave us lots of valuable feedback which we then passed on to Fujitsu which provided us with a loan device for testing. That helped confirm it was the perfect device for us."

There are currently 1,500 Fujitsu devices in the field, leased on a three-year contract and pre-imaged by Audatex with its specialist Abuntex software. Courtesy of an extensive local support network by Fujitsu, on-site service is provided next day in the event of hardware failure, helping keep its customers up and running.

"These devices are critical to our clients – if they aren't working, they can't make money, so we rely on Fujitsu having that robust support infrastructure within South Africa," says Hutchinson. "Given the rough and tumble nature of the work involved, there are inevitable breaks so that safety net is critical."

Tailor-made protection

Nevertheless, broken screens can cost a huge amount to repair so to ensure even more rugged protection in the field and prevent against these breaks, Fujitsu teamed up with Mobilis, provider of specialist device casing, to create a customized cover that would accommodate all the ports and the docking station while adding convenient hand grips.

"These Fujitsu devices really do get used and abused on a daily basis – we have even had clients accidentally drive over them and yet the bespoke Mobilis cover has provided protection. It also allows us to dock the device without the hassle of removing the case," comments Hutchinson. "The devices operate in dusty conditions, such as a panel beating workshops, which could affect operations and yet with 1,500 devices in the field we only receive one support per week on average."

Battery life is another concern as agents spend significant amounts of time on the road; not only can the Fujitsu STYLISTIC R727 comfortably run for one full day on a single charge, but an additional battery can be inserted into the keyboard for extended life.

"We returned to Fujitsu because they stayed in touch with us, understood our needs and is always finding new and better ways of doing business," concludes Hutchinson. "If there are service issues, Fujitsu goes out of its way to solve them. The tailor-made casing is a great example of how Fujitsu goes the extra mile to keep us – and our customers – happy."

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Tel: +27 11 233 5401

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