



## Case Study

### SPRING 4 Implements OpenHand Mobile Email

Real-estate is not a static business. Professionals are constantly on the move, meeting clients and visiting sites to keep ahead in a rapid-paced industry. The staff at Spring 4, a London-based property consultancy are no exception. Advising on properties all over the country, with associates all over the world, the team of specialist brokers at Spring 4 needed a reliable, robust method of real-time mobile communication - particularly email.

Operations Director, Richard Peperell explains: "It was obvious to us that mobile email could enhance our business. We're constantly on the move, and have to exchange documents all the time. We were looking for an accessible system - but one that did not require a huge financial investment."

Spring 4 looked at several options on the market but eventually chose OpenHand mobile email. "Other providers were initially attractive, but once we looked at the projected running costs, we saw they were way too high," explains Richard. "OpenHand doesn't charge a monthly rate, so all we paid was the initial purchase price plus the mobile operator's ongoing call charges. It turned out to be the most cost effective option."

OpenHand held various discussions with the Spring 4 team to understand exactly what they needed from their wireless technology, so that the software could be tailored to meet their needs. Following these discussions Richard and his colleagues chose the Sony Ericsson P900 smart phone as their mobile device.

OpenHand's engineers took only a few hours to configure Spring 4's laptops and P900s to run the mobile email software. Spring 4's database, which runs on ACT software, was synchronised with Microsoft Exchange so that all 4000 of the company's contacts were available via the smart phone.

"OpenHand's software was attractive to us because it's available on the most flexible gadgets. The P900 is a combined phone, camera, video and computer, which means that we don't need to carry a laptop, a phone and a PDA," says Richard. Spring 4's people can now use the smart phones to take photos of a potential property in Canary Wharf, and send it to an associate in New York via OpenHand.

Because OpenHand is not tied to a specific network or appliance Spring 4 are able to stay with their existing mobile carrier and simply negotiate a separate rate for data transfer. OpenHand also supports the most widely available wireless network protocols, including GSM and GPRS, so Spring 4 staff can stay in touch wherever they are in the world. "We have members of staff who travel extensively. We didn't want to be limited by the number of territories that would support our choice of mobile email," says Richard.

Spring 4 uses OpenHand to send and amend contracts, so security was also important to them. To prevent unauthorised access the OpenHand server sits within Spring 4's firewall, and uses the 128bit AES (advanced encryption standard) which scrambles information being transmitted from the server to the device. And because none of the data is ever stored on the handheld unit, but remains on the server instead, vital information is not lost if the smart phone gets lost or stolen.

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Since the system was introduced in January 2004, Spring 4 have seen significant productivity gains, as staff are able to work on vital documents when commuting and between meetings. The company has also found that using email rather than making phone calls is a significant time and cost saver. Staff have also found that OpenHand helps establish a distinction between professional and personal life, by reducing the amount of work that needs to be done at home.

Richard Peperell sums it up: "Business is a series of transactions; using OpenHand really keeps us one step ahead of these transactions."

## **For Further Information and Support**

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