

# NetMotion Mobility® Keeps S&N Communications Field Workers Connected and Proprietary Customer Data Secure

S&N Communications provides construction, engineering and locating services to some of the nation's largest utilities and telecommunications carriers. With more than 1,200 employees operating from 60 field offices in 38 states, one of the company's primary services is locating underground utilities prior to construction projects. S&N Communications' field workers rely on mobile devices connected wirelessly to information systems to complete this and other critical tasks. However, connectivity issues would often slow down productivity and put customer data at risk. S&N selected NetMotion Mobility to solve these problems and gain the mobile visibility and management it needed to securely expand its field operation.

## Meeting Customer Requirements

All of S&N's customers have stringent data security requirements. Yet S&N struggled to provide the same level of protection for proprietary data sent to and from the field as it did in a traditional work space. "With our crews distributed around the country using mobile devices, it was difficult for us to deliver that data," said Brett Hatfield, Director of Information Services. "Using a traditional VPN leaves the end-user as a local administrator on that device and makes us and our customer very vulnerable."

Since field workers were not required to provide a unique login, they would often share devices with each other. It was not uncommon for IT to discover that a worker was using a device that was assigned to someone else months ago. Not only did device swapping make it impossible to have worker accountability, it made it difficult for the company to comply with its customers' strict information sharing requirements.

Field workers would lose five to ten minutes of productivity every time they lost a connection. When they had two bars, they knew that they would have to submit the data two or three times. Connectivity problems also increased the burden on the company's IT department, especially when they required devices to be serviced by a technician – an issue compounded by the sheer number of the company's remote workers.

S&N's IT department knew it needed a better solution.



### INDUSTRY:

Utility

### OBJECTIVES:

- Maximize security of sensitive customer data in hands of field workers
- Gain visibility and control over device use
- Improve device connectivity

### SOLUTION:

- NetMotion Mobility

### RESULTS:

- Met stringent customer security requirements
- Improved user experience and worker productivity
- Gained administrative control of mobile devices
- Streamlined mobile device deployment and management

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**Brett Hatfield** | Director of Information Services

### **Gaining Total Control and Visibility**

After analyzing several options, the S&N team determined NetMotion Mobility was the best choice for meeting its business needs. Mobility gave S&N's IT staff administrative control over its entire mobile workforce, even those operating hundreds of miles away. It allowed the IT team to expand its local network into a wide-area network accessible by workers in the field. And Mobility's compression, application persistence and stability across Internet sources provided workers with a traditional network workstation experience right in their vehicle. Thanks to Mobility, S&N could finally implement a user log-in requirement, which helped to prevent the spread of viruses and other security threats.

“We have the ability to deliver essential information to folks that we couldn't deliver to before, with much greater security,” said Hatfield. “With strict data encryption and policies in place, a lost machine is useless to anybody who finds it. Anytime a computer is used in the field, the S&N team knows who signed in, from which machine, when they connected, and any resources that were accessed.” This significant improvement was required to meet customer requirements for information-sharing.

Mobility also allows S&N to push updates to machines in the field in the background and with no manual intervention. The company has also dramatically streamlined the process of putting a new machine in the field for the first time. “We image the machines and spin up the user's phone, connect them, close them down, flag them for a required password change and ship them the box,” said Hatfield. “When the user receives the machine, even though they've never had any contact with the IT department, or even been into an office, they open the machine, turn on their phone, turn on their hotspot, boot up, sign in the first time, and they are connected to the network and ready to work. Mobility does that for us.”

### **Always-on Connectivity for Everyone**

Because of the seamless connectivity, S&N has found uses for NetMotion Mobility beyond the field environment. “Every mobile computer, regardless of the user's role, gets Mobility – including C-suite, directors and area managers,” said Hatfield. “No matter where their work takes them, they never need to shut their device down. They close it like a book, get to where they're going and open it up again. If there's a known Wi-Fi source, then they're on the network with no interaction required.”

Mobility has allowed S&N to provide the security assurance and trust needed to win customer contracts. By overcoming security issues and increasing worker productivity, management and visibility through a constant mobile device connection, Mobility has become the cornerstone of S&N's IT strategy.