

## Customer Profile



Safelite® AutoGlass employs more than 3600 technicians to repair and replace automobile glass for more than two million customers throughout the United States.

## Industry

*Field Service - Automotive*

## Region

*Americas*

# Safelite improves productivity among field service automotive technicians

## The Challenge

The US-based company, Safelite® AutoGlass, employs more than 3600 field technicians to repair and replace windscreens for over three million United States customers annually. Previously, Safelite's process consisted of dispatching technicians and providing administrative reporting manually.

Each day, at the beginning of their shift, technicians were required to drive to a central location to pick up work orders and return at the end of their shift to drop off their completed paperwork. Therefore, the only way a staff member could alert the technician about work order changes was to call him on his two-way Nextel BlackBerry®. These calls were distracting to the technician, especially if he was in the middle of a job. "Commonly, work order changes occurred [e.g. changes to appointment time and contact telephone numbers] and happened any time of day," says Nathan Beckman, MRM Project Manager, Safelite. "For records purposes, the staff had to update the most recent work order with new information as soon as they received it. On average, work orders were printed five times a day, creating wasted paper."

Moreover, the process required numerous steps to obtain approval prior to beginning the work and to receive final authorization to process the payment. This delayed the ability to issue claims to insurance companies and to keep track of the billing cycle at the home office.

## The Solution

Safelite wanted to create a custom solution that could manage field tasks wirelessly – without the multiple steps, phone calls and paperwork previously needed. The solution needed to be easily deployed, scalable, reliable, cost-effective and minimally impact the technicians. After researching and evaluating several technology options, including tablet PCs, signature pads, docked and undocked applications, as well as internally developed applications, Safelite selected the ExpeData® Enterprise Digital Writing platform, based on Anoto Digital Pen and Paper technology for creating its solution.

Safelite's new Mobile Resource Management (MRM) solution is comprised of several components, including the EDW platform, ExpeData-provided thermal paper rolls (with the Anoto dot pattern) and digital pens, portable thermal printers, BlackBerry smartphones, GPS tracking & mapping services and credit card processing capabilities.

This is how the solution works in practice:

- Safelite technicians use BlackBerry smartphones to clock in and receive work orders for the day. They can start routing right from home, saving time and fuel. When the technicians click on the first job of the day, the customer information comes up. The technicians will then call and let the customer know that they are on their way. The driving directions provided by the GPS will give them an estimated time of arrival.

## ExpeData, LLC

*ExpeData® is the global leader in enterprise digital writing and the first company to build a platform designed to meet the needs of Fortune 100 and Global 2000 companies. The ExpeData Digital Writing Platform is a complete package with the features and functions needed to implement digital writing.*

*“Let’s also remember that while the increase in productivity has been tremendous, there is also a reduction in the back-office handling of the paper. We no longer have to mail the forms to the home office, open and microfiche the work order and then store the original. This savings is compounded by the fact that the transfer of the image is instantaneous. Without the ExpeData/Anoto solution this would not have been possible,” says Chris DeLong, Director of Information Technology, Field Systems, Safelite.*

## The Solution Continued

- When the technicians arrive at the customer’s site, a job preparation screen comes up on their BlackBerry smartphones. They enter the required information, which triggers a work pre-authorization form that also includes the estimate. Using a portable thermal printer, the technicians print the form on paper with Anoto’s dot pattern.
- The customers sign the authorization form with a digital pen. The pen writes like a standard ink pen, but contains a tiny infrared camera and processor which enables it to “read” and digitize words as they are written on the form. The data is transmitted via Bluetooth® to the BlackBerry smartphone where it is processed and then routed (using ExpeData’s routing software) to Safelite’s EDW server.
- Once the windscreen is replaced, the technicians hit a button on their smartphones and Safelite’s tender shows up on the screen. The technicians swipe the customer’s credit card and receive approval on the spot. They print the receipt and the customer signs it with the digital pen. The pen transmits the data to the BlackBerry smartphone (using ExpeData’s routing software) and then on to Safelite’s EDW server.
- As a result, all paperwork is left with the customer. From Safelite’s perspective, it is a paperless system, even though there is a piece of paper (digital) in the solution.

## The Results

Safelite understood that technology was only one challenge that their IT team would face when deploying a new way of doing work. They knew that changing people’s work habits could be met with resistance. However, due to the user-friendliness of the digital pen, the technicians were able to start using it quickly, which accelerated their adoption of the new technology. The new solution also includes GPS tracking on each work order. It sends longitude and latitude information from each technician’s BlackBerry smartphone to the home office. And if a technician can’t find a customer location, a GPS link in the work order will provide a detailed map of directions. Safelite estimated that the previous dispatching process took up to four phone calls to complete one work order. The new process is less time-consuming; Safelite is able to assign one more job to be completed per day to each technician.

Since the “paperwork” has become digital and there is immediate access to documentation, centralized customer service has improved. Now, customer inquiries are able to receive attention within the same day and the work orders are processed nearly in real-time. Another benefit is the reduction in driving time by the technicians since they no longer have to drive to the office each morning or evening. The new dispatching process has thus resulted in major fuel savings, contributing to Safelite’s “Green” mission.

**“Safelite has reduced the amount of work order paper used in MRM markets by 80%. In the previous model, a work order would need to be re-printed each time a material change occurred. This averaged 5 printouts per work order – printouts before a technician would have even taken the form out on the job. This massive reduction in paperwork has led to not only a more environment-friendly workplace, but also one in which customer service reps can focus on customer needs instead of shuffling papers.”**

**Nate Beckman, MRM Project Manager**



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