

Protrack Solutions

A Partnership Story



Protrack Solutions is a Gloucestershire-based business that designs and builds a range of tracking systems and devices primarily for the logistics sector. With its roots in vehicle telematics, the company has quickly expanded beyond fleet tracking and into other industries, such as logistics and even smart locks. Protrack needed a connectivity partner that could bring greater predictability and scale to its core business while helping them to expand into new growth areas.

The challenge

Protrack's core business offering is its fleet tracking service, Protracker Pluss, which allows businesses to track their vehicles in real-time, providing GPS location data and information on driving performance such as acceleration, braking, cornering and speed, in addition to providing two-way communication with drivers via SMS messaging. All these features require reliable network connectivity to operate.

In order to bring its new service to market quickly, Protracker Pluss initially used single network SIMs to provide the necessary connectivity. However, since each SIM only operated on one network, coverage blackspots soon became a problem. No carrier could offer universal cross-network coverage, so the best solution for Protrack was to purchase SIMs from those carriers where coverage was generally strongest for each of their customers. This was far from an ideal solution for a 'mobile' service, and could never entirely eliminate blackspots.

Additionally, having multiple carriers and tariffs also made it very difficult for Protrack to manage its expanding network of devices and to control its operational costs.

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Operations and Support Director



"A telematics solution is only as good as the connectivity that powers it. Poor connectivity was hampering the quality of our products. It was undermining our entire business so we needed a solution fast," remarks Tracey Pope, Operations and Support Director, Protrack Solutions.

In addition to the challenges of managing multiple carriers, Protrack's existing supplier could take up to two months to deliver a bill. This meant if a device was malfunctioning and using far more data than it should, they would not know until the bill landed two months later. In one instance, this resulted in Protrack receiving a bill of over £15,000 for a single device that had inadvertently been sending over 1,000 text messages a day.

The approach

Bamboo was able to solve all Protrack's challenges by designing a bespoke M2M tariff, which provides 4Mb of inclusive data per SIM per month. Directly addressing their connectivity challenges, all SIMs would deliver connectivity across multiple networks globally. Protrack's devices could switch to the network with the strongest signal at any given time, with no roaming charges to worry about.

To further address their need for predictable pricing, the 4Mb per month allowance for each SIM would be pooled across all their SIMs. If one device used more than 4Mb in a month, it could be offset against a device which used less. Since most of Protrack's devices used less than 4Mb per month, they would have a healthy buffer to counterbalance its more data-intensive devices. As a result, Protrack has never since exceeded its data allowance or received an unexpected data bill.

"Bamboo designed an M2M tariff specifically for our needs. They took the time to understand our business and proposed a solution completely tailored to our requirements," comments Pope.

Bamboo's M2M service also includes extensive monitoring and control features via the Cisco Jasper IoT platform. This provides Protrack with real-time reporting and customisable alerts, including an alert that is triggered if any device exceeds 20Mb in a single month, indicating it is malfunctioning. This enables them to proactively arrange for faulty device to be replaced before the customer even discovers an issue. A far cry from waiting two months to hear of a fault.

The result

The benefits for Protrack can be summarised in two words; predictability and partnership. Firstly, the pooled data tariff gives them the peace of mind to develop new telematics solutions with complete confidence in what the connectivity costs will be (no matter where the device will be used) while the automated alerts and central management enable them to deliver the highest service.

Secondly, the partnership between the two companies extends beyond the traditional buyer/seller relationship. Whereas Protrack's previous telecoms supplier would simply process orders on demand, Bamboo is actively engaged in their business and product roadmap. It is a true business partnership.

"We specifically wanted a supplier that could work with us to grow our business," comments Pope. "Our Bamboo account team knows our business intimately, and I know I can brief them on our latest product plans and have a productive conversation about how best to deliver the connectivity for it."

Since working with Bamboo, Protrack has been able to accelerate the development of its product pipeline safe in the knowledge that it has a reliable communications partner behind it, and is currently in discussions with Bamboo to develop connectivity for an upcoming smart padlock that could revolutionise security in the construction industry and other sectors.