Getting ahead of the competition

FACTS

Customer: One of South Africa's most successful vehicle finance companies.

Challenge: Quick processing of credit applications gathered in the field, to boost competitive edge.

Solution: DP&P solution developed by Comcorp Solutions, incorporating Anoto functionality. Employs Nokia digital pen, digital paper and uses Bluetooth and GPRS to transmit completed forms back to the office.

Benefits: Quick processing, meaning that customers don't get lost to the competition. Ease of use for staff.

Getting back to customers

For banks with sales representatives out in the field, processing credit applications from potential new customers quickly can make the difference between making a sale or losing business.

For a South African vehicle finance company, quickly transferring information back to the bank's back office system allows all the necessary credit checks to be run quickly – and makes it possible to get back to the potential car buyer quickly. In a competitive market, the time saved can be crucial.

As in many other countries, legislation in South Africa demands that banks secure an original signature on application forms, meaning that paper and pen remains a must.

Comcorp Solutions has devised a system that can speed up this process for banks, while still using paper and pen. Using Anoto digital paper and pen functionality, the company makes it easy to transfer information given by the customer in the field onto the bank's own computer system.

Call back the same day

The bank's back office system uses state-ofthe-art technology, but for a user, it is simplicity itself. The bank representative fills in the potential customer's details on a paper form as usual. The difference is that he or she is using a Nokia pen, equipped with an infrared camera as well as a normal ink cartridge.

The forms that the staff uses are also subtly different, as they are printed with a special digital pattern that enables the pen to memorize what they have written. But to the naked eye, the digital forms look very similar to any other forms.

When the bank representative in the field has taken the customer's details, the document is encrypted and sent via

Bluetooth to the staff member's mobile phone. The mobile phone then sends the information via GPRS to the bank's computer system.

Later that day, back at the office, the information is already being processed on the system. This means that the bank representative can often call the client back with an answer just hours after taking his or her details out in the field. For bank staff, this means that they are light-years ahead of their competitors.

The icing on the cake, as far as bank staff is concerned, is the fact that the Anoto-enabled pen is so easy to use. Staff can be trained to use the pen in the morning, and be out using it with no problems in the afternoon.

A head start

The bank has now got 700 staff using the pens, meaning that they have become a major tool for the organisation.

Comcorp has also had a great deal of interest from other banks in South Africa. In fact, all four major banks in South Africa have shown interest in the system. One of them is launching a pilot of the system in some of its 800 branches.

There is a wide range of applications within banking for Comcorp's solutions – Comcorp Solutions CEO Richard Moss says there is interest in using digital paper and pens in a whole range of contexts, including credit card applications, mortgage applications and other loan applications.

"The banks using this get at least a one hour head start – and because this information populates their systems directly, they get an advantage over their competitors," he says.

Partner profile:

Comcorp Solutions
Comcorp was established in 1993 and began trading as a financial services business. In 1999 Comcorp used the technological competence it had built up to develop a software business. To date Comcorp Online has processed over 1,000,000 loan application submissions to our banking partner's worth over R400bn. In January 2005 Comcorp Solutions (Pty) Ltd was formed to focus on Digital Pen and Paper Solutions.

www.comcorp.co.za

Anoto Digital Pen and Paper technology

An Anoto Digital Pen looks and feels like a normal ballpoint pen. However, it contains an integrated digital camera, an advanced image microprocessor and a Bluetooth® transmitter. Any paper can be used with a digital pen, if the Anoto dot pattern is added to the layout before printing the paper. The Anoto dot pattern consists of numerous black dots that can be read by the digital pen, but are almost invisible to the naked eye. The pen reads the pattern and registers what and where the user writes.