

FORWARD AIR

ABE360 DELIVERS WIDESPREAD BENEFITS FOR T&L STATION WORKFLOWS

Leveraging enterprise mobility management solutions for operational-wide impacts

**INDUSTRY**

Transportation and Logistics

PROBLEM

- Aging fleet of devices
- Significant in-house IT support required
- Devices running old, Windows OS
- Workflow efficiency improvements needed

SOLUTION

- 4,000-unit hardware refresh
- Abe360 full device lifecycle management
- Unified platform for all MDM needs
- Streamlined OS migration from Windows to Android

RESULTS

- Increased workflow efficiency
- Reduced burden on in-house IT team
- Company-wide security improvements
- Cost savings across multiple business units

COMPANY OVERVIEW

Forward Air is a leading, single-source provider of ground transportation and shipping services to the North American air freight and expedited LTL market. Headquartered in Greenville, Tennessee, Forward Air serves customers in the US, Canada and Mexico from its 200+ locations. For over 40 years, Forward Air has simplified the complexities of surface shipping for businesses of all sizes. By delivering a wide range of services that improve reliability and lower costs, Forward Air delivers a cost-effective, time-definite alternative to air transportation.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Effective, powerful mobility solutions are critical for today's T&L businesses, but keeping hardware and software solutions up-to-date can present a challenge.

Forward Air's station teams were using aging devices, running Windows Mobile operating system. Support for Forward Air's fleet of aging Intermec CK71 and CK75 handheld scanners ceased, leaving Forward Air's scanners at end-of-life and end-of-support. Multiple business units were utilizing various data collection solutions, requiring a wide range of support for both hardware and software, spreading IT resources thin.

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Implementing longer range scanning technology within reach of each driver has **improved scan time by more than 84%**, amounting to hours of time saved per week.

Meanwhile, 125 stations across the US were in need of workflow efficiency improvements. Forward Air's warehouse forklift teams utilized handheld mobile computers in the receiving process, requiring each driver to spend time taking hold of the device, often exiting the forklift in order to scan incoming goods, then returning to the vehicle, holstering the device, and navigating software on a small, 4" screen. This workflow was costing Forward Air precious seconds per scan, and required a large number of staff on shift to meet demands.

As Forward Air navigated these challenges, they were simultaneously undergoing organizational growing pains, presenting a critical time to revisit their mobile technology program. AbeTech approached Forward Air with a coherent, Abe360-powered OS migration plan, and device upgrade timeline.

SOLUTION

By leveraging Abe360 lifecycle approach, AbeTech's experienced team was able to provide Forward Air with a strategic, customized rollout of over 4,500 mobile devices across multiple business units, at 125 stations, along with support services for every lifecycle stage of each device.

- **Seamless Refresh Services**

By offering experienced end-of-life support, AbeTech provided guidance and a customized timeline to strategically stabilize, then phase out aging devices and operating systems. This provided a fresh start at Forward Air's pace, ensuring teams were fully supported with tools to ensure a seamless transition to new products and features.

- **Superior Device Selection, Procurement and Provisioning**

After extensive review of Forward Air workflows, AbeTech was able to recommend the Zebra ET51 Tablet and DS3608 handheld scanner for forklift operators. Each demo unit was custom-configured and



Abe360

Simplified, end-to-end lifecycle management of tablets, scanners, mobile computers and more – from one unified platform.



Zebra ET51 Tablet

Enterprise-grade durability designed to handle the demands all-day business, from both inside and outside the four walls.



Zebra DS3608 Handheld Scanner

The ultra-rugged DS3608 boasts advanced scanning capabilities, effortlessly capturing 1D and 2D barcodes, on any surface, in the harshest conditions.



optimized to Forward Air's specific requirements. They were then deployed and a six-month, four-location pilot was conducted to ensure the devices solved for organizational pain points and performed as needed across various locations.

- **Advanced Deployment**

Once Forward Air determined the pilot units were performing as expected, 1200 of each device were systematically rolled out to 125 stations nationwide. Devices arrived at each location ready-to-use, with standardized permissions pre-set to precise specifications.

- **Top Tier Service & Support**

With a total of 4500 units deployed and in-use across multiple business units, AbeTech implemented a regular support cadence, allowing the work of server updates, OS maintenance and more to be outsourced to a team of experts. In taking on all support, service, returns and repairs, the implementation of Abe360 has allowed Forward Air to free up four full-time IT staff, allowing valuable IT resources to be reallocated to more critical tasks. Access to real-time data also enables informed decision making, maximizing device uptime.

- **Quick & Easy Returns Process**

Forward Air's new upgrades also provided benefits to the RMA and spares pool process. With AbeTech's reliable support cadence, 35% of devices could now be quickly triaged in-house by AbeTech and returned to spares pool without returning to the manufacturer for RMA. This reduced turnaround time from 7-10 business days, to 24-36 hours, and also reduced the number of spare devices required to keep on-hand.

RESULTS

The infusion of new hardware plus AbeTech's endpoint and mobile device management continues to provide Forward Air with far-reaching benefits, both to operational productivity and as an extension of their IT team. "Working with AbeTech [has] provided us with the industry knowledge and best practices to investigate and migrate to a new data collection hardware platform suitable for various operating companies and workflows." says Ray Sweeney, Vice President of IT, Mobile Systems at Forward Air.

Prior to the introduction of AbeTech services, Forward Air had four dedicated IT employees responsible for their full fleet of mobile devices, from spares pool management, to device imaging, RMA processing and more. These specialized positions are now able to focus on more critical tasks across the organization, leaving full-lifecycle mobile device management to Abe360.

Within the warehouse, refreshed hardware has reduced operator scan time in receiving and moving freight within each station. Implementing longer range scanning technology within reach of each driver has improved scan time by more than 84%, amounting to hours of time saved per week. This also allowed Forward Air to make schedule

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By partnering with AbeTech, our data collection devices are now architected and managed in a manner allowing for efficient testing, app development, and deployment with minimal risk to operations and provides us with enterprise-wide device visibility.

Ray Sweeney
VP, IT, Mobile Systems

improvements, reallocating now-available staff to other critical duties, and maximizing productivity for each shift.

Business-wide, OS upgrades and regular support cadence means Forward Air has improved security across all departments. Keeping devices up-to-date reduces burden on Forward Air's IT team and ensures devices won't leave vulnerable to security threats. Standardized support also means that Forward Air can access real-time data, allowing issues to be identified and addressed proactively to reduce downtime.

Forward Air has also seen cost savings and improvements to the spare pool program. When a device is in need of repair, the AbeTech team can quickly swap with a fresh unit, and then handle repair, enabling 35% of devices to be incorporated back into the pool. This greatly reduces the number of spares required to keep on-hand, protecting Forward Air's investment, enabling operational resiliency, and ensuring maximum uptime.

By delivering a one-two punch of best-in-class technology and superior support, AbeTech has helped Forward Air revolutionize their mobility program and free-up valuable staffing resources. According to Sweeney, “By partnering with AbeTech, our data collection devices are now architected and managed in a manner allowing for efficient testing, app development, and deployment with minimal risk to operations and provides us with enterprise-wide device visibility.” The company expects to add another 2500 units to their fleet by 2025.





WE'D LOVE TO CHAT WITH YOU

Interested in driving operational-wide improvements that enable efficiency? Let's start with a 10-minute conversation to find out how AbeTech can revolutionize your workflows and enhance your bottom line.

[Contact us today](#)

ABOUT ABETECH

At AbeTech, our passion is to revolutionize your connected enterprise through the power of innovation, technology, and enablement. We are dedicated to helping industry leaders automate and streamline their connected technology transformation—understanding your challenges, simplifying your technology initiatives, and enabling you to maximize your IT investments.



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