

Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO)

Mobile Workforce

Case study



JEPCO empowers its service engineers with the ability to bill customers on their doorstep.

Invoicing and billing customers accurately for their power consumption is not a straight forward task. Filling in forms is a manual process with the added challenge of errors being made by misinterpreting illegible handwriting. One organisation in Jordan has now discovered a new way of reducing mistakes such as these in addition to speeding up the overall billing process and subsequently improving the company's profitability.

Established in 1938, Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) was the first utility company to operate in Jordan. Covering 20% of the Jordanian geographical area, the company's principal activity is supplying electricity to central and northern Jordan. JEPCO's customers constitute 66% of the total electricity consumer population who are currently serviced by 2,741 JEPCO employees. In 2006, the total revenue generated by the company was 280 million Euros.

The Challenge

The challenge facing JEPCO was to provide a workable solution to support the rapid expansion of its customer base. This resulted in the need of carrying out accurate meter readings. JEPCO therefore had to develop an improved and much more efficient way to handle its predominantly manual process of dealing with meter readings, manual data entry and customer billing. This process could take as long as three weeks with JEPCO's old system!

Ahmed Burjaq, head of the collecting department at JEPCO explains: "It used to take around one week for bills to be issued from the main offices and sent to the customer by a distributor."

Saeed Shameer, head of JEPCO's IT Department adds: "This process took two to three days to validate, and all in all it took ten days before the customer could be billed. Overall it took a lot of time, effort and resource from JEPCO employees."

The main challenges in developing a new mobile printing solution to support this process for JEPCO were:

- **Nationwide application:** JEPCO meter readers are based all over central and northern Jordan. The new system needed to be a fast and effective means of transferring data and minimizing the amount of mistakes being made.
- **Speed:** In order to help improve overall efficiency, the new system needed to be fast, reliable and cost-effective.
- **Scalable solution:** Looking ahead to the future, JEPCO wanted the new solution to be scalable, coupled with ability to grow with its expanding customer base.



Solution technology

Zebra® QL 420™ series
mobile printers with
Bluetooth®

Software developed by
GCE Soft



The Solution

JEPCO recognized the need to automate its customer meter reading process in order to speed up the entire chain of events, increase efficiency and improve reliability. The idea for the new system was developed by a Zebra Technologies team using their worldwide experience with mobile industry solutions.

The team responsible for creating this newly developed door-step billing system combined the Zebra® QL 420™ series mobile printer and a handheld mobile input terminal. Key features of the printer were its light weight, ruggedness, a long battery life with the addition of a user friendly program language. The Zebra QL 420 is ideal for outdoor use being able to withstand extremes of temperature and water. It has to be strong enough to survive outdoor use, yet light enough for JEPCO service personnel to carry around during their daily customer visits.

An initial three hundred Zebra printers have been rolled out to the service engineers. JEPCO customers are already experiencing immediate improvements in the billing service.

The Benefits

Each JEPCO field service engineers can now take customer meter readings, enter the data immediately into the hand held terminal and print the invoice on demand, right on the customer's doorstep. A process that before took 10 days can now be executed in 10 seconds. After finishing their shift, field service personnel return to the JEPCO office, where the data is transferred wirelessly onto the JEPCO main server. This now avoids the need to transcribe any data.

With the new system in place the benefits were visible almost immediately. The results proved to be so highly time-efficient that JEPCO field service personnel had freed up time that could be used in different departments. The time previously used for collecting bills had been reduced by half!

JEPCO's cash flow improved dramatically due to a 25% increase in subscribers who now settle their invoices within the same month of bills being issued. The two-step cycle of meter reading and billing has been made a one step.

“Zebra has provided a successful solution for JEPCO and in time, further noticeable results will be evident to help improve JEPCO's daily operations.”

**Ahmed Burjaq
Collecting Department
Manager, JEPCO**

