



BlackBerry Customer Success Story



The General Motors (GM®) Global Battery Systems Lab is responsible for testing all lithium-ion batteries for GM vehicles. The 38-employee lab tests prototypes and production batteries as part of a plan to accelerate the adoption of electric-vehicles. As part of General Motors Co., a global car manufacturer that employs more than 200,000 employees worldwide, the Global Battery Systems Lab uses innovative technologies to support the company's global production and quality goals.

Industry: Manufacturing & Technology

Region: North America

Company Size:

Small Business Unit within Large Enterprise - 38 employees (Global Battery Systems Lab)

Application: General Motors LABerry

Solution:

- Research In Motion® (RIM®) Corporate Developer Program (CDP)
- BlackBerry® Enterprise Server

Major Auto Manufacturer Develops BlackBerry App to Help Improve Engineer Efficiency in Battery Systems Lab

THE CHALLENGE

Testing expensive battery prototypes is an around-the-clock job for the engineers at GM's Global Battery Systems Lab. Batteries can become sluggish when the temperature or voltage drops dramatically, while excessive heat or high voltage can make them unstable or vulnerable to damage. Engineering team leads are constantly on-call in case the lab monitoring equipment generates a fault alert that signifies a problem is about to occur. Confirming the reason for the alarm sometimes requires onsite investigation, often at non-business hours.

"We have extremely expensive prototypes being tested here, costing tens of thousands of dollars each, and we can't take any chances that they'll become damaged," said Tony Modafferi, Engineering Group Manager at the General Motors Global Battery Systems Lab.

THE SOLUTION

Two GM Global Battery Systems Lab engineers, Jim Rollenhagen and Eric Chu, saw an opportunity to use mobile technology to better protect the batteries during testing while at the same time freeing up engineering resources. Since GM already had a BlackBerry Enterprise Server and senior executives use BlackBerry® smartphones, the lab team decided to work with the technology they knew and develop a custom BlackBerry® application.

The team relied on its own Java® development experience, with guidance from the Research In Motion (RIM) Corporate Developer Program (CDP), to develop the General Motors LABerry application. The custom application links to the lab's monitoring and alert software so that engineers receive detailed test information on their BlackBerry smartphones.

LABerry provides four functions: a quick overview of all tests; a dashboard for the company's web-based monitoring software; a screen that lets engineers see data from specific test stands in almost real-time; and a graphical viewer which provides a near-real time graph of critical tests.

GENERAL MOTORS GLOBAL BATTERY SYSTEMS LAB'S BENEFITS

"Our custom BlackBerry application really lets us stay connected to the lab. We can check in any time we want, from wherever we are."

Tony Modafferi
Engineering Group Manager
General Motors Co.

By working with the CDP, the developers at the Global Battery Systems Lab accessed the documentation and technical resources needed to bring LABerry from concept to a fully-functional reality. "Without the CDP, we wouldn't have known where to start - it would've been nearly impossible for us," said Chu.

The application is also built to take advantage of the security benefits of the BlackBerry solution, a critical feature since the app is often accessed offsite. Developers have also integrated LABerry with the corporate directory so staff can locate lab engineers without having to return to a computer.

"This application really lets us stay connected to the lab," said Modafferi. "We could have a second or third shift in the lab, but we don't need to; we can check in any time we want, from wherever we are."

LABerry has nearly eliminated the need for engineers to return to the lab in off-hours since many alerts can be addressed remotely. The app also fosters greater efficiency onsite. "It's made the engineers' jobs easier, especially when they can now monitor tests while not in the lab," said Modafferi.

To further increase efficiency, the Global Battery Systems Lab team is now looking at developing LABerry for the BlackBerry® PlayBook™ tablet.

<http://www.blackberry.com/go/success>



<http://us.blackberry.com/developers/resources/corpdevsupport.jsp>

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