

The Power of Mobile Technology for Scale Sales & Service

New Software Tools and Mobile Devices Are Changing the Game

By Paul Inman



There's a not-so-quiet revolution taking place in industries across the country. The revolution is driven by the emergence of widely-available wireless Internet access married with the rise of inexpensive smartphones. Companies are leveraging the power of these technologies to rewrite long-standing processes, to create greater efficiency and to generate new competitive advantages. Now that revolution is impacting business owners in the scale sales and service industry, and the rules are being rewritten.

Making the Move – Paper to Digital

Kurt Koenig, President of Koenig Scale located in Terre Haute, IN, started searching for a different, more efficient way to manage his scale business in early 2010. “We looked at the few solutions that were available in the marketplace, but there were none that really provided what I was looking for,” explains Kurt. “The systems were all tethered to a PC or a laptop, or they were proprietary and unavailable, and they really didn't allow for efficient communication with our service techs in the field. Plus with all their gear, service techs rarely carry a laptop around, but they all have a cell phone.”

In the absence of finding a suitable solution, Kurt found a partner to help him develop a solution tailored to the unique needs of the scale

business. The result was SmarterCerts.com, a web-based software tool for managing scale certificates that is deployed through native Android and iOS applications to mobile devices in the hands of each Koenig Scale employee. The application captures information and data directly on the phone, and synchs it back to the centralized Web service whenever there is cellular or Wi-Fi connectivity.

“I found a really strong software development company, and they believed in my vision,” says Kurt. “They took my idea and really ran with it; in a few short months they were able to develop a beta version of the software, and we were the first customer. Today, the software is very robust and the list of customers is growing quickly. We benefit because we have an ISO compliant solution that makes us more efficient, helps us gain new business and retain existing customers while improving our business process.”

Growing Pains – Getting from A to Z

For as long as he has worked at Koenig Scale, Kevin Koenig, Service Manager, started his day by sending his service technicians out on scheduled jobs to service and calibrate scales for the company's many customers. The process always began with stacks of paperwork – service

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requests, certificates printed on triplicate forms and the various notes and documents required to keep everyone moving in the right direction. All that changed in early 2012 when the company adopted the SmarterCerts.com certificate management system.

“At the outset, I was really the person who took the lead on launching the new system in our company,” explains Kurt. “At the beginning it’s a leap of faith, and you need to be committed because it takes some time to get all your customer data in the system and to work with your service techs on training. But the system is very easy to use, and it is a short time before you are saving much more time than you have invested.”

“I used to spend many hours each month reviewing and signing off on the paper-based certificates our service technicians created,” says Kevin. “Then I would easily spend an additional 14-16 hours each month doing nothing more than coordinating the creation and mailing out of finalized certificates to our customers. It was tedious, not the best use of my time, and my

service techs dreaded all the paperwork in the field and back at the office. We also had all the administrative work to file, maintain and manage our customers’ certificates.”

Using the new system, Kevin’s daily routine and that of his technicians looks much different. Today

Date	Calibration Date	Internal Comments	Strain Approved	Strain Adjusted	Strain As Found	Strain As Lpt	Strain As Found	Strain As Lpt
03/07/2012	Running August 04	No	No	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed
03/22/2012	Temp and Humid test	Yes	Yes	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed
04/07/2012		Yes	Yes	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed
05/07/2012		Yes	Yes	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed
06/11/2012		No	No	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed
06/09/2012		Yes	Yes	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed	Passed
06/08/2012		Yes	Yes	Passed	Passed	Failed	Failed	Failed
10/01/2012	Temperature test	No	No	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed
10/08/2012		No	No	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed	Failed

The 'scale history' screen shows the results of a scales previous inspections. The color coded system gives a manager an at-a-glance history of a scales passes and failures, which helps to identify a scale that's due for replacement or additional maintenance.

when it’s time to send a service tech out to a customer, Kevin opens the application, clicks on the scales to be calibrated, assigns the scales to a service tech and the system automatically sends out all the scale information including test points and tolerances to the selected service tech’s phone. The service tech no longer needs to carry stacks

of paper forms. Once on the job site, the tech uses the SmarterCerts App on the phone to capture the calibration results and create the certificate.

Dennis Watson, General Manager of Indianapolis-based Central Scale, Inc., also has adopted the system for his business. “My customers and my technicians would never let us return to paper now,” he explains. “In the past, our technicians might spend an hour or more just

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getting all the paperwork filled out and signed. The system actually has the weight tolerances built in, and it instantly let's a tech know if a scale is out of tolerance. The tech no longer has to reference Handbook 44. With the mobile system, we remove all the work to fill out forms and at the completion of the process our customer has an electronic ISO compliant certificate."

Both Dennis and Kevin note a number of benefits from using an electronic system including:

Customer Certificates are stored electronically. Each customer has a login that allows them to view and access their certificates. "They no longer need to call us to find a certificate 24/7," explains Kevin. "I can't tell you how much time that saves."

Immediate communication with field techs. "If we get a service call during the day, we can send it out to the tech in the field," notes Dennis. "We can send the tech the service record for just that scale. The system provides him with the model number of the scale indicator and the platform or base. He can fill out the calibration report following the repair, and the customer has an electronic audit trail of any repairs."

Real-time updates of system data. If you have multiple techs on the same inspection you don't need to worry about duplicate efforts or that the job is complete before the techs depart. The system updates each tech's phone with the data from all techs on the job as it is captured.

Higher quality certificates and customer satisfaction. "We've nearly eliminated penmanship and data capture errors and there are no issues of legibility or accuracy," says Kevin. "Customer's get much more detailed certificates because the system makes it so easy to provide them with all the information.

Better identification of service needs leading to more sales. "One surprise has been how much more information I get from the techs on the electronic forms regarding potential needs for service," says Kevin. "As I walk through the approval process, I can use the system to generate a quote for the customer on the additional service work. Often the customer replies to this system email with a PO number for the new work."

A Brave New Future

The mobile technology revolution is here to stay. With so many benefits for business owners and employees, it's a revolution that will create many winners. The best testimony for why you should consider taking the plunge comes directly from the pioneers.

"In a month, we are easily saving 10 times what we are paying for the system just in my time, paper and administrative time,"



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says Kevin. "That doesn't even include the value of the increased quality of our certificates and customer satisfaction. I have a lot of demanding customers, and the ability to send certificates electronically frees up much more time to proactively work with each customer."

"After even just a couple of days using the new system, I don't believe my service techs or my customers would ever let me go back to a paper," says Dennis. "This approach works."

About SmarterCerts.com

It all started with one scale company who couldn't find a software solution to help them manage their business. So we built one. We think SmarterCerts' success lies in its focus. The system isn't some CRM or ERP platform jerry-rigged to serve the needs of the scale business. It was built with the input of professionals in the industry and always with an eye to serving the unique needs of the scale business. If you haven't taken SmarterCerts for a test drive, we hope you'll give us a chance to show you how much it can improve your business. You can learn more—sign up for a free 30 day trial at www.smartercerts.com.