

Utilities

## / Case study /

### Handheld device gives engineers the power to deliver out in the field



## / Challenge /

When you run one of the UK's leading electricity distribution businesses with a complex network covering 135,000 miles, you need equipment that can survive the tough outdoor environment that power engineers operate in.

## / Solution /

Western Power Distribution engineers are using the fully rugged P5236 which has developed a strong reputation for reliability and toughness out in the field. It offers connectivity and processing power that is second to none and was chosen after detailed field trials and user evaluations.

## / Benefit /

The P5236 is easy to use when performing essential duties like climbing and delivers enhanced connectivity resulting in improved data capture and field to base communications. The device offers real-time asset tracking across Western Power Distribution's extensive network.

## / Western Power Distribution /

*"With around 7.7 million customers and 6,000 staff looking after a network covering 135,000 miles, we needed something that we could rely on to deliver both high performance and simplify our operations out in the field."*

*Western Power Distribution's David Barker.*



/ Getac P5236 /  
Fully Rugged Handheld

## / Challenge /

IT and communications are fundamental to the reliability and safety of Western Power Distribution's complex and extensive network.

As one of the UK's leading electricity distribution businesses, providing outstanding customer service is a central aim of the company and underpinning this commitment is major investment in new technology – a cornerstone of Western Power Distribution's success in improving reliability and business efficiency across the business.

Key to this is the ability of the company's field engineers to perform quickly and effectively out in the field. To do this, they need solid, reliable mobile communications devices that can deliver instant connectivity and fast processing power, yet are tough enough to withstand harsh environments and the worst that the diverse British weather can offer.

When the company needed to replace existing mobile communications devices that had come to the end of their useful working life, senior management knew that they had an opportunity not only to find a tough alternative, but also use the new equipment to simplify operations out in the field and improve performance.

They were looking for a handheld device that would not only be rugged enough to survive the tough outdoor environment that its engineers operate in, but also easy enough for their staff to use when performing essential duties like climbing.



## / Solution /

Western Power Distribution selected the PS236 after undertaking detailed field trials and user evaluations with its staff.

The high performance device met the criteria of being easy to use and reliable in the tough environments that the company's engineers operate in every day. It also delivered the processing power and connectivity that is essential to the smooth and safe running of the company's network.

The fully rugged PS236 is rated to MIL-STD-810G standard and has already developed a strong reputation for reliability and toughness out in the field.

With high-speed HSDPA wireless networking, it offers connectivity and processing power that is second to none.

"We are looking at all areas where we can automate and improve the reliability of network infrastructure

and this includes simplifying processes to increase efficiency," explained Western Power Distribution's David Barker. "The devices our engineers use in the field are an essential part of the automation and efficiency we are driving towards and we needed to find units that would deliver the reliability and ruggedness we need."

### Keypad offers easy operation with gloves

The handhelds are now being used by engineers as machine control devices to change settings and switch power networks. The PS236's large keypad is ideal for users to operate with gloves and this has made operating the device very easy in whatever challenging working environments the engineers come up against.



The device is built to withstand vibration, drops and shocks, and is the ultimate tool for handheld data input and communication in the field.

It comes with an in-built e-compass, altimeter, integrated GPS, and hi-res display, making it ideal for GIS (geographic information system) surveying and other GPS/mapping-based applications.

Running Windows Mobile 6.1 the PS236 offers varied data capture and real-time data transfer. With 4GB of Flash Memory, it is capable of running applications even in the most extreme environmental conditions.

The PS236 enables Western Power Distribution's field engineers to keep the distribution of power flowing reliably to homes and businesses across the company's huge network.

### Smart battery offers longer working

The unit has an operating temperature range of -30°C to 60°C and the Smart Battery conveys the precise capacity at different temperatures. With 10 hours GPS working time, 6 hours cell phone and 4 hours data transferring time, the PS236 also comes with a vehicle charger and desktop docking options.

The device is small (178 x 89 x 30mm) and weighs just 490 grams, making it easy to carry and use. It is also available in two colours – grey or yellow to suit the application and the environment. The PS236 offers full Bluetooth, WLAN, 3.5G voice and data connectivity and is available with either a PDA or numeric keypad to offer customers a full performance for a diverse range of field-based settings.

### Full sunlight readability

The 3.5inch touch-screen display is readable in sunlight, offering both the anti-glare and anti-reflective capabilities required by Western Power Distribution

engineers to allow them to perform effectively wherever they find themselves.

The ultra-rugged Windows Mobile device has an auto-focus 3 megapixel camera and can also be used as a phone, to offer a well-balanced combination of advanced technology, targeted professional GIS features and pocket PC convenience.

The 4GB of Flash Memory is expandable up to 20GB (with 16GB SDHC allowing the PS236 to offer field engineers the ultimate combination of speed, processing power and rugged reliability. This has enabled Western Power Distribution to simplify the often complex processes that its engineers undertake out in the field, meaning that they can get the job done as quickly and efficiently as possible.



## / Benefit /

"The PS236 was simply the best device for the job," says Richard Beaumont, Utility Specialist at Getac UK. "Western Power is now using 3,000 units, deployed in the fourth quarter of 2011 and the company hasn't looked back since."

The solution has enabled Western Power Distribution to simplify the processes that its engineers undertake and has thereby improved their efficiency whilst they are out in the field.

The company's operators also prefer the speedier connectivity that the unit gives them and the comprehensive GIS (Geographic Information System) and in-built GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver, e-compass and altimeter helps them locate assets wherever they are.

"The PS236 solution has lived up to its rugged reputation and provided the reliability and flexibility that Western Power Distribution was looking for," adds Mr Beaumont.



### / Western Power Distribution /

*Founded in 1999, Western Power Distribution has around 7.7 million customers and a power distribution network covering 135,000 miles. The company has developed a strong reputation for providing excellence in safety, reliability, customer service, business efficiency and care for the environment.*

*Western Power Distribution is now one of the UK's leading electricity distribution businesses, covering the East and West Midlands, South West England and Wales. Investment in new technology has been a cornerstone of the company's success in improving reliability and business efficiency in all areas of the company.*