



## C.V. Ice, McGowan Water Bring Their Drivers Into the 21st Century With Tungsten Handhelds



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Kevin Mason  
C.V. Ice, Inc.

### Technical Highlights

- Palm® Tungsten™ handhelds
- Prism Visual Software’s MiniMate mobile handheld solution and desktop routing application
- Printek’s Printek printers

### More Information

C. V. Ice Company  
[www.cvice.com](http://www.cvice.com)

McGowan Water Conditioning  
[www.mcgowanwater.com](http://www.mcgowanwater.com)

Prism Visual Software  
[www.prismvs.com](http://www.prismvs.com)

### Challenge

C.V. Ice Company and McGowan Water Conditioning may run their operations in very different climates-C.V. Ice delivers ice to retail stores throughout southern California and parts of Arizona, while McGowan serves residential water needs in Minnesota-but both companies shared a common problem: a reliance on an antiquated, paper-based system for handling their drivers’ delivery routes. McGowan was also using that method to handle its service technicians’ calls.

Both companies estimate that several hours were spent every day generating invoices, setting up routes for drivers, and fielding calls from customers who needed deliveries or other services, or who simply had questions about their bills. Drivers for both companies had little account information to give customers when making deliveries, and McGowan’s service technicians had to call the office every time they wanted to check the status of a particular part. In addition, reliance on paper increased the likelihood of costly errors.

As a result, both firms had customers who felt like they had to constantly worry about the status of their deliveries, for fear they wouldn’t get what they needed, when they needed it. On top of that, the companies had difficulty expanding their businesses because of the amount of overhead each customer required.

### Solution

C.V. Ice and McGowan solved all their problems with Palm Tungsten handhelds running Prism Visual Software’s MiniMate application, along with Printek mobile printers equipped with Bluetooth™ wireless connectivity. Now the drivers simply place their Tungsten devices in sync cradles at the start of the day to receive their routes and do the same in the evening to update the system.

At all stops along their routes, the drivers capture delivery signatures on their Tungsten handhelds and supply receipts with their mobile printers.



Solution (cont.)

They also have up-to-date account information and can give customers accurate balances, as well as check consumption histories and make decisions on the fly when necessary.

“Efficiency levels went through the roof once our drivers became comfortable with the technology,” explains C.V. Ice’s Kevin Mason. He uses Prism’s desktop software to plan his 20 drivers’ routes and deal with other administrative tasks, turning what used to be a four-and-a-half or five-hour daily chore into something that takes 15 minutes and can be accomplished remotely, when necessary.

Prism’s software handles route planning, taking consumption histories into account when deciding delivery dates. For C.V. Ice, that means returning to a customer when the system believes they’ve been reduced to 50% of their inventory; Mason says it’s correct at least 90% of the time.

The solution paid for itself in under six months, enabling him to eliminate two job positions and saving around \$70,000 to \$90,000 annually. “I used to have a dispatcher who made volume calls every day,” he recalls, “and we usually had 50 to 150 calls every day from customers who didn’t have a comfort level in our ability to forecast delivery needs. Now they’re getting ice before they need it, and the 10 to 15 calls I get daily aren’t typically from customers.”

McGowan has experienced similar results, with the added benefit that its service technicians also now have access to the information they need to make their jobs easier. The company keeps over 1,000 pieces in inventory, and the techs now use the Tungsten to check the stock level of any part they need. In addition, they have information on the last five service calls.

“It’s made our service techs so much more capable and empowered,” says BR J. O’Halloran, who notes that training them on the Tungsten is much easier than showing them the ropes on the old paper-based system. “I attribute that to how intuitive the Palm is,” he explains. “They’re so easy to use.”

### Solution Summary

- The Palm Tungsten handheld running Prism’s software replaces an antiquated, paper-based system that was prone to errors and left customers with little confidence.
- The drivers simply place their Tungsten devices in sync cradles at the start of the day to receive their routes and then do the same in the evening to update the system.
- The drivers capture delivery signatures on their Tungsten handhelds and supply receipts and invoices on the spot with their mobile Printek printers.
- The drivers have access to up-to-date account information and can make decisions on the fly by checking customers’ consumption histories.
- Planning drivers’ routes and dealing with other administrative tasks, which used to take several hours, now takes just 15 minutes.
- C.V. Ice saves \$70,000 to \$90,000 annually by eliminating all the paperwork and phone calls it used to require when handling customers’ accounts.
- McGowan’s service technicians have access to inventory levels on more than 1,000 parts, as well as information on the last five service calls, eliminating the phone calls to the office that used to be required.
- The Tungsten handheld holds up to the rapid warming and cooling experienced when C.V. Ice’s drivers make their deliveries.