Goodwill

of Northwest North Carolina

Retail Industry

Goodwill Uses Xora to Manage Employee Time, Distribution Logistics with Ease

Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina has been a Xora client for more than three years. Says Director of Logistics Dave Martyn, "Goodwill had recognized the need for a solution like Xora since before I joined the company in 2010." Xora has been solving a specific need for Goodwill: the ability to track employee time, when those employees are working at the region's 60 donation centers.

According to Martyn, Goodwill of Northwest North Carolina utilizes employee teams at each donation center, and they're spread throughout the 31-county region in order to capture the most drop-off donations they can from residents. The initial Xora implementation allowed the employees to "clock in and out, and then enter the number of donations they received at the end of each day," says Martyn.

Xora Plays Expanding Role in Goodwill's Logistical Strategy

More recently, however, Martyn decided to expand the use of Xora to the company's transportation fleet of 12 vehicles. "The drivers move between donation centers and our 40 regional retail locations to pick up the donations and bring them to the stores so they can be sold. We needed a better way of getting information to the drivers to help them navigate to jobs, to the centers, and even to home pickups."

Martyn states that, although each Goodwill vehicle had a GPS device installed, it only allowed for Goodwill management to view vehicle locations; it did not allow for two-way communication. "We ultimately decided to upgrade to Xora StreetSmart," Martyn notes.

At a Glance:

Industry
Retail

Challenges
› Tracking employee time at widespread locations
› Coordinating deliveries & donations across region
› Managing commercial and residential donations

Solution
Goodwill uses Xora StreetSmart to let employees track time, jobs, and deliveries

Results
› Enhanced dispatch capability to donation centers and retail stores
› Expansion of workload without adding personnel or vehicles to fleet

Today, Goodwill of Northwest North Carolina maintains Xora-enabled phones. The majority of these phones are feature phones, designated for the donation centers; the remaining are designated smartphones for the transportation team and donation center supervisors. Martyn notes that they chose a more durable smartphone for the transportation team and the feature phones for the donation centers in an effort to conserve costs. Additionally, approximately five managers utilize the Xora management application each day to upload jobs, dispatch drivers, and do other monitoring activities.

In addition to the ability to dispatch drivers, Martyn cites the ability to manage jobs as a key attribute of Xora StreetSmart: "Now when the donation center notifies us that they're ready to transfer their items to the retail store, we can alert the closest driver using the Xora management application. That's really key for us—being able to reassign the nearest drivers to the donation center that needs our assistance."

Xora is also helping Martyn and the Goodwill of Northwest North Carolina team manage home pickup and commercial donations. The customer service team receives calls about a donation; takes information about what items are coming in, how big they are, and how many items there are to donate; and then schedules the pickup through the Xora management application. "The drivers receive their instructions, and Xora also provides turn-by-turn navigation, which is especially helpful in residential areas," says Martyn.

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Ability to Accommodate Larger Workload Critical to Goodwill

An emerging area of Goodwill's business in North Carolina is the sale of new items at the retail locations. "We're using Xora for proof of delivery. We'll take orders, upload them to Xora, and then dispatch the right driver to complete the pickup. At the end of the run, the driver looks at the order and can take a snapshot of the pickup, which confirms that, 'yes, we received 53 cartons of Hanes t-shirts.' It's so easy to configure that workflow within Xora, and I'm actually amazed by that function," Martyn notes.

All in all, Martyn states that Goodwill's business model has expanded significantly over the last several years, adding new goods and making organization-wide changes. "In fact, you could say that we're stretched to capacity. But with Xora, we have been able to significantly increase that workload without adding any personnel or vehicles to our fleet," Martyn says. "That's significant."

Because of the success Goodwill of Northwest North Carolina has had with the Xora application, Martyn and his team are looking to expand their use of Xora in order to manage their 320 donation trailers.

These trailers serve as rolling warehouses that can be filled with donations and then, when full, they're taken to the retail locations and become inventory. "As the trailers move between locations, you can imagine that they're hard to track—not only the trailers themselves but the inventory in them," Martyn says.

To solve that problem, Martyn is turning to Xora. "We have learned that it's very simple to capture information and populate Xora forms using barcodes and even voice," he says. "Before the end of 2013, our plan is to set up a workflow within Xora that lets the driver scan the trailer's barcode and use a dropdown menu to identify the trailer's contents. The GPS will pick up the driver's location, and then we'll have all the tracking information we really need."

Goodwill Offers Advice to Others Looking for Mobile Workforce Management

Martyn's logistics team has come to rely on Xora for its logistics and mobile workforce management needs, and he cites the capacity of the Xora application to grow with Goodwill's changing needs. "We started small to solve an immediate need, and let it grow from there. That's my advice: do a pilot. Test the concept. There's really no initial cost because it's just part of the phone bill. See how much more you can accomplish with the resources you have, and then expand your use of the application from there," says Martyn.

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- Dave Martyn
Director of Logistics
Goodwill of Northwest North Carolina

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