

Trendfire RTML 2.0 Helps Manage Supply-Chain Operations



Trendfire RTML 2.0 uses S60 3rd Edition devices to manage the process of shipping goods between suppliers and manufacturers

In a world of “just-in-time” manufacturing and razor-thin selling margins, manufacturers such as big automobile makers need to wring every bit of efficiency from their supply chains. A delay in delivery of goods from suppliers to factories — or the delivery of the wrong goods, or delivery of goods to the wrong location — can spell disaster.

“Trendfire RTML is a big, complex application, and we have needed help along the way to make sure it worked with S60 3rd Edition devices. Forum Nokia PRO was a big help.”— Fred Ulmer, CEO, Trendfire

Trendfire Technologies GmbH has found a way to help manufacturers make their supply chains more efficient, cut supply-chain costs, and improve communications between suppliers and manufacturers. The Boeblingen, Germany-based company’s RTML 2.0 (Real Time Mobile Logistics) uses Nokia S60 3rd Edition devices to manage the process of shipping goods between suppliers and manufacturers. Trendfire RTML 2.0 tracks goods as they are shipped, provides real-time location information, and ensures that the right goods are delivered where they are needed.

Making the supply chain more efficient

Trendfire RTML 2.0 is currently being used in a large-scale pilot deployment by DaimlerChrysler AG in Germany. Final production rollout is slated to be completed by spring 2007. When the solution is fully deployed, between 20,000 and 40,000 truck drivers and freight forwarders will use Trendfire RTML 2.0 on S60 3rd Edition devices. The company is also in talks with other car manufacturers, including BMW AG and Volkswagen AG, to deploy Trendfire RTML 2.0 in their supply chains as well.



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Looking ahead:

Trendfire is currently concentrating on launching the full DaimlerChrysler deployment, and negotiating deals with Volkswagen and BMW to use Trendfire RTML 2.0. The company plans to deploy the solution to other automobile manufacturers as well. In addition, the company will integrate Trendfire RTML 2.0 into the automobile supply-chain infrastructure so that it hooks directly into manufacturers’ supply-chain software and other enterprise application software.

After that, Trendfire plans to customize RTML 2.0 for any company in which multiple trucks deliver goods to a central location. It will sell the application as a general logistics application. It has also developed a simpler application for fleet management for loading and unloading any kind of package.

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The application uses S60 3rd Edition devices to track goods transmitted between suppliers and manufacturers. When loading goods onto a truck, the supplier uses a scanner in concert with an S60 3rd Edition device to scan in information about the goods. Over-the-air (OTA) verification using the S60 3rd Edition device ensures that the goods being loaded are the proper ones. The driver then uses Trendfire RTML 2.0 to find out to which DaimlerChrysler location the goods should be delivered. Once the driver is at the site, the application uses the 802.11 capabilities of the S60 3rd Edition device to communicate using DaimlerChrysler's internal wireless network to find out to which gate the goods should be delivered. During the whole process, the truck's route, as well as loading and delivery times, can be tracked.

The process, according to Trendfire CEO Fred Ulmer, significantly increases efficiency and reduces costs. "We have found that RTML on S60 3rd Edition devices can reduce transportation costs by from 10 to 15 percent," he says. "It reduces transportation time, offers real-time communication between supply-chain partners, and provides greater visibility into supply-chain processes."

S60 3rd Edition

"The use of S60 3rd Edition devices has been a key factor in the success we've had to date with Trendfire RTML," Ulmer adds. "Its technical capabilities and market reach made it an ideal platform on top of which to build our applications." Ulmer says that the market reach of S60 3rd Edition was one major reason his company chose to develop for the platform.

"The S60 3rd Edition platform supports multiple high-end devices, and for Trendfire's customer base, it has the highest deployment numbers of any platform. Nokia is the market leader, and that has helped us sell RTML to our customers," he adds.

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In addition, Ulmer says that S60 3rd Edition devices are the only smartphones that include IEEE 802.11 (WLAN) capabilities, which are a must-have for his customers.

"We started using Bluetooth instead of 802.11 to communicate with manufacturers' internal wireless networks, but the IT staff at DaimlerChrysler said that for security and efficiency reasons, we had to use 802.11 instead," he says.

How Forum Nokia PRO helps Trendfire

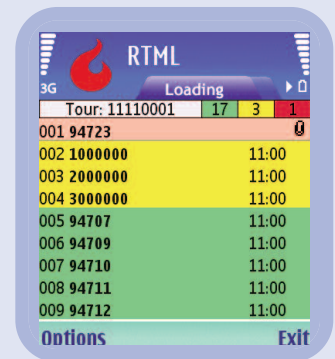
According to Ulmer, Forum Nokia PRO has been an important factor in the success of Trendfire RTML 2.0 and has provided key technical and marketing support. "Trendfire RTML is a big, complex application, and we have needed help along the way to make sure it worked with S60 3rd Edition devices," Ulmer says. "In particular, we needed help with the wireless LAN features. We sometimes needed Forum Nokia PRO to help us access the undocumented features of the S60 3rd Edition platform relating to 802.11. We also had situations in which we couldn't get our application up and running."

Ulmer says Trendfire RTML 2.0 has been one of the first applications to take advantage of the 802.11 capabilities built into S60 3rd Edition devices. For its development cycle, Trendfire needed to get early access to one of the devices with 802.11 capabilities, and Forum Nokia PRO made sure the company was given an early testing unit. After Trendfire encountered difficulties with Symbian certification, Forum Nokia PRO provided key technical support to ensure that certification ran smoothly.

Ulmer says that Forum Nokia PRO support ultimately helped his company close important deals, such as the one with DaimlerChrysler. "Being enterprise-certified, and saying we had the support of Nokia convinced potential customers that we were reliable and reputable," he says. "The S60 3rd Edition and Nokia have been vital to the success of Trendfire RTML," Ulmer concludes. "It's a relationship we see extending well into the future — and to whatever new platforms might come out of Nokia."

For more information, go to:

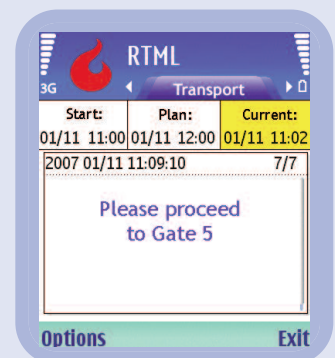
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The RTML 2.0 Loading screen, used during package loading and bar-code scanning. Red package IDs are for packages that have yet to be loaded, while green IDs indicate correctly scanned packages, and yellow IDs are for packages that have been scanned but were not originally scheduled for pick up. The paperclip icon on the right border of the screen indicates an attachment.



A typical message displayed when an attachment is opened.



The transportation screen, showing instructions to a truck driver about where to unload the truck.

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