CASE STUDY: ASTRATA GROUP INCORPORATED


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Maurice Borer, Regional Business Development Manager, Astrata

Astrata Group Incorporated (OTC Bulletin Board: ATTG - News) is focused on advanced location-based IT services and solutions (GEO-IT) that combine GPS positioning, wireless communications (satellite or terrestrial) and geographical information technology, which together enable businesses and institutions to monitor, trace, or control the movement and status of machinery, vehicles, personnel and other remote assets. Astrata has designed, developed, manufactured and currently supports eight generations of GEO-IT systems with over 80,000 units deployed worldwide.

The intensification and proliferation of terrorist activities in the world has prompted the Singapore Government to step up its efforts to increase its homeland security. Companies such as Astrata Group Incorporated who develop advanced location-based IT services and solutions play an instrumental role in delivering homeland security tracking and control solutions to organisations and governments worldwide.

In September 2004, the SCDF invited several vendors to propose a vehicle tracking solution which could provide comprehensive tracking, monitoring, and sophisticated control functions. Following an intensive evaluation exercise of proposed solutions by vendors, Astrata (Singapore) Pte Ltd - a Joint Venture Company owned 51% by Astrata (Asia Pacific) Pte Ltd and 49% by PCS Security Pte Ltd. - was awarded the contract to develop and implement a HazMat Transport Vehicle Tracking System (HTVTS).

The HazMat Transport Vehicle Tracking System (HTVTS) comprises two phases:
- Phase one involves the tracking of all local and foreign vehicles carrying bulk petroleum and toxic material
- Phase two involves the installation of an immobiliser which can remotely stop vehicles from entering exclusion zones.

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Using the solution developed by Astrata, the SCDF will be able to track all vehicles carrying hazardous materials and chemicals which could become a possible weapon used by terrorists. From the control room at their headquarters, SCDF officers will be able to monitor a vehicle’s movement in real time and view the exact location and activities of each vehicle to prevent hazardous materials from being used as a weapon, as well as to minimise the impact of a possible terrorist attack using such materials.

Approximately 500 local HazMat transport vehicles will be fitted with a tracking device which is smaller than a mobile phone and fits under the dashboard. These vehicles can only travel along approved routes away from highly populated areas at specific times to reduce the impact of any possible disasters. If a vehicle strays from its path, the device will trigger an alarm, mobilising emergency services.

Another unique feature of this system is the ability to monitor vehicles in tunnels, urban canyons and underground parking structures. These capabilities set a new benchmark for security conscious nations around the world with similar concerns for public safety. At present, Singapore is the first country in the world to implement the HazMat transport vehicle tracking system.

**The Benefits**

Maurice Borer, Regional Business Development Manager, Astrata (Asia Pacific) said, “The choice was clear for our R&D team. They were looking for a mapping solution and engine which was proven, robust, flexible and easy to use. MapInfo’s MapX® fulfilled all of these requirements. The ActiveX component enables our developers to add mapping functionalities to the application - seamlessly, quickly and easily. MapX is no doubt an efficient and cost-effective tool that is a cut above the rest.”

MapInfo MapX helps simplify application development through its use of standard languages, a streamlined object model, extensive methods and events, efficient property pages, defaults and other wizards. It also offers users a highly visual way to display and analyse location-based data to better serve customers; and management to make better decisions and manage assets and operations more effectively.

Sandy Borthwick, Managing Director for Astrata’s Asia Pacific Region, commented, “MapInfo’s reliable and proven location intelligence technology complements and adds value to Astrata’s product offerings by enabling Astrata to provide flexible and scaleable solutions that can easily be customised to suit our customers’ needs. We are very pleased with the quality and performance of MapInfo’s MapX and as such, we will continue to leverage on MapInfo’s best of breed technology to develop innovative solutions for our customers.”

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