

Energize Mobile Technology: Take It Further with OtterBox

“As technology develops things get obviously a lot slimmer. With slimmer comes dangerous breakage, so we decided to work with OtterBox to get a solid, ruggedized field system.”

—Dave Veilleux, senior technical consultant, Frontline Energy Services

On the ground and in the air, Frontline Energy Services (FES) is committed to increasing efficiency, safety and consistency for utility service providers. The company has evolved from a small, rural pipeline installer to a holistic project management firm. A major part of this evolution has been the adoption of mobile technology. Using Apple iPad and iPad mini devices equipped with OtterBox Defender Series protection, the firm can offer a level of data analysis new to this stalwart industry.

Now exclusively focused on data solutions, FES began working in the field — giving the company a deeper understanding of what the utilities industry needs. The company was founded in Flagstaff, Ariz., providing utilities construction services. FES Founder, Brian Herzog, saw an opportunity to vastly improve the industry through a more strategic approach to construction, maintenance and monitoring.

Today, FES provides a host of data-driven solutions to its utilities customers with a goal of making the industry more efficient, less reactive and safer. This evolution has been made possible by advancements in technology. By equipping field technicians with the proper technologies, FES can garner real-time data used to avoid major outages, predict maintenance issues and assess risk.

“The most usable thing when you’re standing on the side of a ditch or the side of a road in the middle of the desert is a tablet or a smartphone,” explained Geoff Morgan, executive vice president of operations for FES. “Especially when you can capture GPS information, you can get map information, you can email data, you can update records with a tool like a smartphone or tablet. You can really do things with technology that have never been done before out there.”

In addition to providing real-time data capture and feedback, the tablets have replaced huge reams of paper maps. The first application for FES was monitoring underground utilities from the air. Aerial patrollers for FES cover 7,000 miles per month in helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. Their main focus is pinpointing any potential threats to existing natural gas pipelines.

“Before, it was a lot of paper maps and a lot of memorization for the routes. The tablets have made it a lot easier because you can see where you are in real time on a satellite image,” said aerial patroller Doug Wylde. “It definitely cuts down on errors and makes you more efficient. You can always tell where the pipeline is. You can place a point exactly where you saw something going on that could be a threat to the pipeline.”

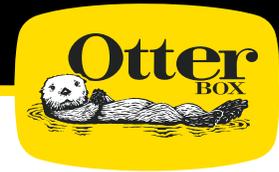
Following the success of that first program, FES built additional capabilities for terrestrial monitoring, meter observation and other data applications. By early 2014, the company had grown its iPad and iPad mini fleet to about 400 devices. The iPads eliminated more than just paper. Much of the work had to be collected in the field and then entered in the office. Data collection is much more efficient now, with a single touch point.

Deploying hundreds of devices with custom software applications isn’t an easy task. One thing that Dave Veilleux, senior technical consultant and manager of IT infrastructure for FES, knew was that the iPads would need to be protected.



Frontline Energy Services
Headquarters: Concord, Calif.
Products/services: Provides mapping, data collection and analysis services to the utilities industry
Mobile technology: Apple iPad and iPad mini





"We have only deployed one device without a case, and it's because I couldn't get one fast enough. It sat on a desk in the client's office. It wasn't used for a week, and it still ended up with a cracked screen, so we don't deploy anything without an OtterBox case," Veilleux said. "As technology develops things get obviously a lot slimmer. With slimmer comes dangerous breakage, so we decided to work with OtterBox to get a solid, ruggedized field system."

FES is coupling the rugged OtterBox Defender Series case with the Utility Series Latch carrying accessory to offer trusted protection with convenient in-field use. The Defender Series features multiple layers of protection with a built-in screen protector, while allowing access to all features of the device. The Latch, which secures easily around the device corners, includes attachments for hands-free carrying.

"The reason we chose the OtterBox case is because we use all the functions of the device," Veilleux said. "It's very important to have the device protected, but we also need something like the Latch where we can hold onto it. We can take a photo while holding onto the iPad, and the camera isn't obscured."

FES is paving the way for major changes in the utilities industry using mobile technology, with plans to accelerate new programs to provide an even greater level of service. OtterBox premium solutions facilitate that advancement by protecting the company's investment and allowing mobile technology to go further.

About OtterBox:

Starting in 1998 with a line of dry boxes, OtterBox® has evolved into the No. 1-selling case for smartphones in the U.S. and a global leader in mobile device protection.* Its diverse lineup of protective cases for smartphone and tablet devices is the result of precision engineering, diligent testing and continual technological advancement — giving technology users the confidence to make the most of their mobile world. OtterBox is a seven-time honoree on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest growing private companies in the U.S. and was named one of "America's Most Promising Companies" by Forbes Magazine. The company is headquartered in Fort Collins, Colo., with offices in San Diego; Boston; Cork, Ireland; and Hong Kong.

For more information, visit otterbox.com. Protecting your mobile world.



OtterBox Defender Series

- Sturdy two-piece polycarbonate shell completely covers the device
- Built-in screen protector guards display against scratches and scrapes
- Shock-absorbing slip cover with port covers keeps out dust and dirt
- Removable screen shield doubles as a media viewing stand
- Full access to all device features and functions
- Available for Apple iPad 2/3/4, iPad Air, iPad Air 2, iPad mini and iPad mini with Retina display



OtterBox Utility Latch

- Straps conveniently around the corners of the device/case
- Includes multiple carrying and tethering options for hands-free use
- Accessories pouch for easy storage
- Works with most 7- to 8-inch and 10-inch tablet devices in Defender Series cases

* Source: The NPD Group/Retail Tracking Service: Cell Phone Device Protection/Units Sold 1/2014 - 12/2014