

# RPG Integrated Property Services Case Study

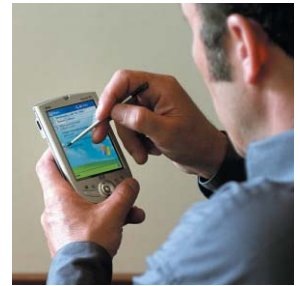
HP iPAQ's deliver performance and mobility for SMB property services company RPG.



"We felt the HP iPAQs offered the most advanced and effective development tools, and would integrate easily into RPG's core Microsoft Windows environment, providing a stable and rugged solution for valuers in the field"

– James McCutcheon  
Chief Software Architect  
J3 Technology





## Case Study Overview

Accurate and fast property valuations are becoming an increasing necessity in the real estate industry as both buyers and sellers aim to waste as little time as possible in the purchase or sale of property. This has placed pressure on lenders, and property valuers to review their processes in order to cope with the quicker turnaround times while maintaining integrity and accuracy in the reports produced.

RPG, an integrated property services company, which performs residential and commercial valuations turned to software architects J3 Technology and Hewlett-Packard (HP) to create a unique wireless solution utilising HP's iPAQ Pocket PCs. So successful has it been, it has attracted Federal Government research and development tax concessions and the company has moved quickly to patent its industry-first business solution.

Today, RPG's mobile team of valuers can complete valuation reports on-the-spot, and transfer data to the company's main system in North Sydney, using GPRS and Bluetooth connectivity.

### Business challenges

RPG integrated property services is one of Sydney's leading valuation and consultancy firms. It was established more than a decade ago and has accreditation with more than 30 different lending organisations, most of them major banks. As well as residential real estate valuations, the company also provides commercial, industrial, retail and rental valuations. In an increasingly pressured Sydney property market, RPG found that buyers, vendors and lending institutions were constantly pushing for a faster turn-around of valuation reports. Under RPG's manual system, the company's valuers would fill in forms while at a property location and then complete the report back at their office.

"Valuers had a week to 10 days to complete a valuation, however, with the Sydney property market booming and demand for valuations increasing, we were increasingly required to complete a valuation within 48 hours," said RPG Managing Director Ron Gedeon.

"When you hit a brick wall because of the system you use, you either accept that you can only take your business so far or you look for a solution.

"With our manual system we each could do only two or three valuations a day but we needed to do twice as many to keep up with client demands. We talked to a lot of people and made the decision to invest in a long-term and strategic solution."

## Industry

- Property.

## Hardware

- 10 HP iPAQ h3870 and HP iPAQ h3970 Pocket PCs and compatible mobile phones with GPRS and Bluetooth connectivity.

### How HP helped

RPG turned to independent software developer J3 Technology to help it design an effective solution, incorporating the company's key business processes into a mobile device. J3's Chief Software Architect James McCutcheon recommended HP's iPAQ Pocket PCs against other handheld options because of its simplicity and robust capabilities.

"We felt the HP iPAQs offered the most advanced and effective development tools, and would integrate easily into RPG's core Microsoft Windows environment, providing a stable and rugged solution for valuers in the field," said McCutcheon.

J3 Technology worked with RPG to custom-build the application, called the Remote Asset Valuation System (RAVS ©), using embedded visual basic and .NET. The solution was designed to eliminate the need for any bulky papers and would allow the valuers to move easily around the building, accurately recording details as they went. The application was loaded onto HP iPAQ Pocket PCs with GPRS and Bluetooth connectivity achieved through compatible mobile telephones.

"To make the solution easy to use, we designed drop-down scripting screens that would provide the key sentences to be filled in, such as the precise land size or number of bedrooms," said McCutcheon.

Once developed, J3 Technology had planned a one-day training session but the iPAQs proved so easy to use that the valuers piloting the solution were able to show colleagues how to use it and it was adopted without delay.

### Value delivered

The HP iPAQ solution has proven its worth. The company achieved a complete return on investment within the first year, despite the relatively small upfront investment. In the second year of the project, the company doubled its return on its investment. The solution continues to yield a remarkable return through the doubling of productivity without any added pressure placed on its staff.

Using the standardised drop-down, scripted screens, valuers can quickly complete information on land-size, title details, number of rooms as well as sketch a plan directly onto the iPAQ. It can then be digitally signed before the information is uploaded to the main computer system. Other databases can also be remotely accessed using the Bluetooth connectivity.



"When we complete a valuation report our clients know that the information is recorded on-the-spot and provides them with the most accurate view of the property," said Gedeon.

"We saw that our clients had a real business need for a quicker turn-around of valuations and we responded with a solution that provides every opportunity for business growth. We can now do twice as many valuations a day with the same number of staff without increasing their workload.

"I'm already looking to new business opportunities, such as the capabilities that the forthcoming HP iPAQ Pocket PCs with built-in camera will bring."

## About RPG

RPG integrated property services, is one of Sydney's leading valuation and consultancy firms. Established for over a decade, with accreditation from over 30 different lending organisations, RPG is well known for the provision of residential real estate valuations and is a major provider of commercial, industrial, retail, special usage and rental valuations. More information is available at [www.rpgvaluers.com.au](http://www.rpgvaluers.com.au).

## About HP

HP is a technology solutions provider to consumers, businesses and institutions globally. The company's offerings span IT infrastructure, personal computing and access devices, global services and imaging and printing. For the four fiscal quarters ended April 30, 2004, HP revenue totalled \$US76.8 billion. More information about HP is available at [www.hp.com.au](http://www.hp.com.au).

### Challenge

- To enable the valuers to radically improve their productivity, delivering valuation reports more quickly and accurately to clients.

### Solution

- A hand-held mobile device that allows valuers in the field to record property reports and transfer them onto the RPG's main IT system.

### Benefits

- Productivity has doubled while the ROI was achieved within the first year. The solution is easy-to-use and provides a standardised and highly efficient means of completing reports.

More information about HP is available at [www.hp.com.au](http://www.hp.com.au)

\*Ron Gedeon images (page 1 and 3), supplied courtesy of Spy Photography.

© 2004 Hewlett-Packard Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice. The only warranties for HP products and services are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty. HP shall not be liable for technical or editorial errors or omissions contained herein.

5982-8538ENAU 09/2004

