

# GRAFTON PARTNERS WITH 1st TOUCH TO OFFER “OUT OF THE BOX” MOBILE ORDERING SOLUTION TO THE SOCIAL HOUSING SECTOR

Submitted by: 1st Touch

Thursday, 26 February 2009

---

Grafton Merchanting GB, best known for brands such as Buildbase, Plumbase and Jackson Building Centres, is to offer its social housing sector customers an “out of the box” mobile parts ordering solution; following a partnership with Europe’s leading enterprise mobile workforce technology group 1st Touch [www.1sttouch.com](http://www.1sttouch.com).

The two year renewable package comprises a high-spec, touch screen PDA, with full warranty and includes data airtime provided by Vodafone. The device is preloaded with 1st Touch’s easy-to-use, materials ordering software and comes with hosting, training and support included. The package integrates fully with Grafton’s existing, outsourced or managed materials service.

Clients of Grafton, in the social housing market, typically manage their own in-house stores. By adopting an outsourced or managed stores solution, in conjunction with mobile ordering, the significant costs of stock management are completely removed and field based operatives no longer need to return to base every time they need supplies. Rather, they simply order them online from their PDA and collect them from their nearest Buildbase, Plumbase or Jackson Building Centre. The time once spent travelling back to base, can now be re-directed to customers instead. By this means, Grafton’s customers are able to deliver faster, better service levels, whilst reducing the costs of running their organisation.

The system, which is hosted and supported by 1st Touch, links back to Grafton’s back office systems, so that stock can be automatically replenished in readiness for the next day’s work. This enables Grafton to increase its responsiveness to its customers.

The 1st Touch mobile platform, upon which the Grafton solution is based, has established itself firmly as the leading mobile workforce solution in the property services and social housing sectors. The solution uses low-airtime usage, “Smart Client” technology that automates the links between the PDA and Grafton.

The Grafton solution costs less than £500 per user per year for two years after initial set up and training, after which the term is automatically renewed for a further two years. Device upgrades and further software modules are available when required.

Cherry Rance, Marketing and Channels Manager of 1st Touch believes that the Grafton solution will prove popular, noting, “In these difficult times, this solution delivers the ability to fundamentally change the way in which one supplies materials to mobile operatives. With the net affect that Grafton’s customers save both time money and increase efficiency; it is a powerful incentive to go mobile. We chose to partner with Grafton Merchanting as they have the brand name and market share capable of offering an effective nationwide solution. In addition, Grafton’s outsource materials service is already a huge success. By combining this with 1st Touch’s sector proven mobile solution, we are confident that many organisations will scrap their stores and make the change.”

Peter Butterfield, Brand Support Director of Grafton Merchanting echoed Rance’s comments adding, “We

have been working with 1st Touch for some time and have several mutual customers who have already implemented the wider reaching enterprise 1st Touch mobile technology, integrated with Grafton systems. This success led us to devise an easy to use, easy to maintain and low cost option mobile ordering solution with 1st Touch, which we believe is the first of its kind in the market. It is exceedingly gratifying to be able to offer our customers a simply, ready-to-go way of transforming their business.

“In addition, should customers need to add further mobile functionality, there is no other mobile package available that is as comprehensive and all encompassing as the one we offer.”

Ends.

Notes To Editors:

About 1st Touch [www.1sttouch.com](http://www.1sttouch.com)

1st Touch, based in Southampton, Hants, has enabled dozens of field workforce-based organisations to painlessly embrace new mobile technologies and so achieve significant savings, greater productivity and more cost-effective use of resources.

Enterprise mobile technology enables organisations to completely transform existing paper-based working models into dynamic, flexible and efficient mobile working solutions.

1st Touch Mobile delivers three clear and unique benefits:

- Reduced costs to organisations because airtime is minimised and the system is always available – with or without airtime
- Flexibility through simple customer control over forms creation and amendment
- Integration to multiple back office and other enterprise software applications, so that data is entered only once.

The property services market, including Social Housing, is a key focus for 1st Touch, where best of breed mobile solutions can deliver fast tangible benefits to the business.

About Grafton

Grafton Merchanting GB Ltd brings together Grafton Group's Merchanting operations within the UK. It includes Buildbase, Hirebase, Civils and Lintels, Plumbase, Jackson Building Centres, PDM, L&G Forest Products, Hendricks Lovell, Acorn and Keelsupply Drylining and Insulation Specialists.

By combining the strengths of our market leading brands Grafton Merchanting GB is able to offer a seamless interface to all our brands at group procurement level giving a complete materials solution for our partnering customers.

For further information, please contact:

Cherry Rance  
1stTouch  
07800 910420  
0871 716 3060

cherry.rance@1sttouch.com

or

Leigh Richards  
The Right Image  
07758 372527  
0844 561 7586

leigh.richards@therightimage.eu

or

Jade Woodward  
Grafton Merchating GB Ltd  
01865 871795  
01865 779129 (fax)

partnering@supplychainsolutionsuk.com