

# RealPage Customer Profile

Lane Company

## Maintenance on the Move:

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July 2005



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## INTRODUCTION

As both a multifamily property owner and respected fee manager, Lane Company has established a track record of aggressively adopting cost-cutting, profit-boosting technologies. Their integrated, web-based information system represents the cutting-edge of property management software. And the company's latest effort to boost efficiency through technology has been in the often-overlooked area of property maintenance.

"People think of maintenance and they think of bricks-and-mortar, fixing air conditioners, that sort of thing," says Mike Cavanaugh, Senior Service Manager at Lane. "Information technology is not what immediately comes to mind, as it does with functions like accounting. But the fact is, maintenance is an information-heavy function, and streamlining both the transfer and use of this information can have a big payoff."

Cavanaugh identifies two major problems with the way maintenance has been approached up to now: the communication of information, and the use of this information to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

"Service requests and maintenance reporting has always been paper-based, and this presents certain fundamental problems," says Cavanaugh. "The most obvious is that filling out forms and a desk covered with service requests wastes time, and leads to incomplete reporting. Second is that this paper-based information is not available in a form that helps managers perform analyses and make decisions."



## GOING PAPERLESS WITH REALPAGE

Part of the RealPage Facilities product line, the Mobile Service Requests system is built around Pocket PCs with wireless Internet access carried by each maintenance technician instead of clipboards. The technicians use these Pocket PCs to both receive service requests and send reports of work completed, including time spent.



“You’d think our onsite service technicians would resist moving from paper to a handheld electronic device, but we’ve found the opposite to be true,” says Cavanaugh.

“They love these devices. They’re extremely easy to use and make our techs feel more professional. The truth is, they’d rather have their teeth pulled out than to have us take their pocket PCs away.”

All of which begs a question: how do you teach traditionally “non-techie” types to use a PC-based device in the first place? RealPage has addressed the

issue by offering simple training geared to people without PC experience. Even the most “old-school” technician is comfortable with the device in a very short time.

Then there’s the language barrier. Since many maintenance organizations draw on the large pool of Spanish-only talent, RealPage created a Spanish-language version of the device that works seamlessly as part of the system, automatically converting English to Spanish and Spanish to English.

The initial rollout has been to 10 properties, comprising 2,500 units. Further rollouts are to follow once the system is firmly established at these initial sites.

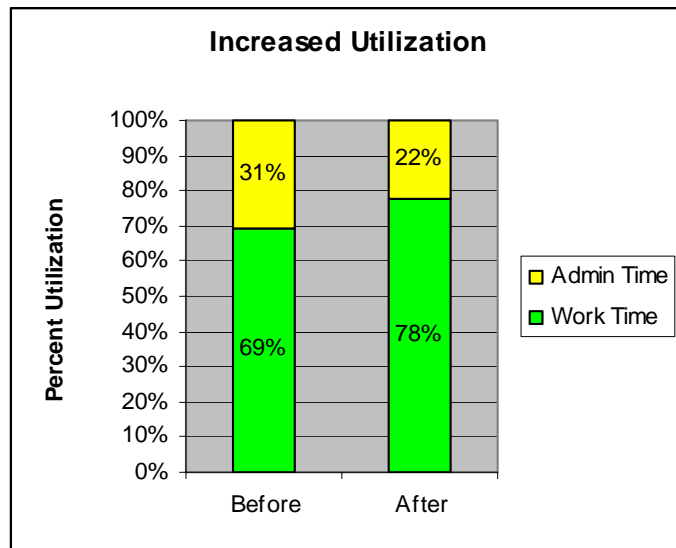
## LESS BUSY WORK, MORE REAL WORK

Service managers at Lane have noticed a big difference using their new maintenance management system. Reports which used to be done manually over the course of several hours now take only a moment to produce. Also, instead of going to an office to pick up and drop off paper service requests, and often waiting around or chatting while they're prepared, techs can stay out on the site, actually getting the work done. The service requests come right to their Pocket PCs. When they're finished a task, they simply punch in the details and they're sent wirelessly to the web-based system.

For service managers, who both manage and actually perform maintenance tasks at Lane, there's no more desktop covered with paper. They're free to help maintain the facilities rather than distribute and organize service requests, resulting in a ten percent larger maintenance staff without adding headcount.

Not only are service techs now getting more done in less time—they're also documenting work that wasn't recorded before. "Let's say a tech is in to fix someone's AC, and the resident tells them the sink is leaking, so they go ahead and take care of it," explains Cavanaugh. "Sometimes they don't want to be bothered with a new service request, so they just fix it, and the work isn't recorded anywhere. But with the new system, they can initiate a service request for the sink quickly and easily, on the spot."

But what about the "Big Brother" effect: techs feeling that their activities are now too carefully tracked? "We haven't had any negative feedback at all about that," says Elizabeth Pickworth, Project Manager for Lane. "In fact, our maintenance staff now feels more important, more respected, more 'tied into the company.'"



## CAPTURING INFORMATION FOR BETTER DECISION MAKING

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the system has been the capture of information that was practically unavailable to managers until now in a usable form.

“Trying to put together useful, informative reports from stacks of paper service requests is a nightmare,” says Pickworth. “But with the new system, all the information about what the techs are doing and the assets they’re working on goes right into our central computer system, where managers can analyze it.”

Information about maintenance activities can be provided in a single click, replacing a manual process of creating reports in Excel format.

Managers can now determine which service techs need more training, in what areas. They can also match skill-sets to tasks more accurately, and add, reduce or shift staff more effectively.

And, just as important, the system allows managers to easily track maintenance history for residents, units, and assets, including the parts and labor costs. This is a great advantage for budgeting, purchasing, spotlighting ongoing maintenance issues, and deciding which assets to retain and which to eliminate over time.



## SUMMARY

Because the system is web-based, as is the rest of the OneSite suite, managers have access to the information anytime, anywhere with an Internet connection. Some even use it at home, for planning the next day's work.



“With the addition of this system, we have not only become more efficient, but have also brought yet another area of our business into the totally integrated Web-based system we have long envisioned,” says Pickworth. “It’s an exciting time to be in property management.”

## ABOUT LANE COMPANY

Lane Company is an award winning, fully integrated real estate company engaged in the ownership, development, acquisition, management, construction and rehabilitation of multifamily communities. It manages almost 30,000 conventional, affordable and public housing units, primarily in the Southeast.

## ABOUT REALPAGE

Located in Carrollton, Texas, a suburb of Dallas, RealPage provides property management products and services to more than 20,000 apartment communities across the United States. It currently has four major product lines: OneSite<sup>®</sup> on-demand property management systems that automate property management functions while providing real-time access to important data; CrossFire<sup>™</sup> on-demand property marketing systems that automate and enhance the process of capturing and entering leads; YieldStar<sup>™</sup> on-demand asset management systems that help owners and asset managers optimize asset values through revenue management, portfolio management, and market intelligence; and Velocity<sup>™</sup> cash acceleration systems that expedite the invoice to cash cycle. For more information, visit [www.realpage.com](http://www.realpage.com).



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