

BlackBerry Case Study - Professional Services



Public Relations Firm Gets More from its BlackBerry Solution

SpeakerBox Communications, LLC

SpeakerBox Communications, LLC is a boutique public relations and marketing firm primarily focused on serving the technology sector.

Success On BlackBerry

Industry: Professional Services

Region: Americas

Company Size: Small Business– 18 employees

Email Environment: Hosted Microsoft® Exchange 2007 via Entourage (Mac Platform)

BlackBerry Alliance Member Solution: Hosted BlackBerry® services by Apptix™

Challenge

Outsource the management of the BlackBerry® Enterprise Server to limit the need for IT personnel and deliver enterprise grade mobility to the company's BlackBerry® smartphone users.

Solution

Apptix provided SpeakerBox Communications with Hosted BlackBerry services to help monitor, manage and provision the BlackBerry smartphones used internally by its employees.

SpeakerBox's Results

- Cost effective way to manage mobility without in-house IT resources
- Plan for disaster recovery and continuity of operations
- A more productive workforce, including the ability to support teleworking
- An enterprise class mobile solution that supports communication and social networking

The Situation: IT-Constrained Company Needed Help Managing Mobility

SpeakerBox Communications is a growing public relations firm focused on the technology sector. With its recent client successes, the company now has more employees than ever who rely on BlackBerry smartphones to do business.

The challenge for SpeakerBox was finding a way to deliver enterprise class mobility, as a small company, without needing to dedicate in-house IT resources to manage the BlackBerry solution. They had several goals in mind:

- Have a cost-effective mobility solution that can scale with the company's growth
- Avoid hiring in-house IT teams to manage the mobile solution
- Have a disaster recovery back-up plan in case of technology disruptions

"We have all used BlackBerry smartphones for some time and desktop synching worked well when there was just a few of us," says Elizabeth Shea, President and CEO. "But as we added more BlackBerry smartphone users, we realized we needed something that would scale to our growing needs and offer us wireless synching for our email, Calendars and Contacts."

Hosted BlackBerry Services Cost-Effectively Solves IT Challenges

Apptix, a BlackBerry Alliance Member, offered SpeakerBox hosted services for the BlackBerry Enterprise Server, as well as hosted services for Microsoft® Exchange.

For a monthly fee, Apptix eliminates the need for SpeakerBox Communications to hire in-house IT staff to manage a BlackBerry Enterprise Server. Since this is a hosted service, Apptix helps ensure that SpeakerBox Communications has maximum uptime and access to the BlackBerry smartphone services upon which it relies.

"With Hosted BlackBerry services, we also get the advantages of a solution that offers us disaster recovery and business continuity," says Shea. "We always backed up our systems before, but there is peace of mind in knowing that if there is a fire on our premises, our communications systems are housed somewhere else. A hosted model gives us the ability to have this all offsite so we don't have to worry."

This is not just valuable for major disasters, Shea says that it's a useful service to have even during more mundane disruptions, such as power outages. The few times the power has gone out in their building, she has been able to send her staff home to continue working on their BlackBerry smartphones because the email and BlackBerry solution is managed off the premises.

"You want to feel like you have the efficiency of a big company, but sometimes it's too expensive to pay for the necessary resources. I don't have a full-time assistant, so I rely on my BlackBerry smartphone to keep me organized."

~ Elizabeth Shea, President and CEO, SpeakerBox

How It Works.

Application Type: Hosted BlackBerry Services

BlackBerry Alliance Member Solution:
Hosted BlackBerry® services provided by Apptix™.

- Users can compose, send, and receive email- plus update Calendars and Contacts- wirelessly without having to synch BlackBerry smartphones with desktop systems
- Apptix hosts both the BlackBerry Enterprise Server and the Microsoft Exchange Server for SpeakerBox Communications
- Apptix offers Service Level Agreements that cover the uptime of the system
- A monthly fee covers the costs of hosting and managing the mobility services

Enhancing Team Productivity

"Because our clients are in the technology sector and operating at such a rapid pace, there's an expectation that we will be immediately accessible and responsive to them," says Shea.

The company's insight into the needs of the technology industry gives Shea a strong desire to make her team as productive as possible. Being able to access the wireless features of the BlackBerry solution is one way she's discovered for them to be more efficient.

"We're all on the road quite a bit for meetings, and it was always challenging for me to physically synch my computer with my BlackBerry smartphone," says Shea. "Because all this synching now happens over the air with the BlackBerry solution, my employees and I can be sure our Calendar and other organizer features are up to date."

Shea says two years ago, her company did not have this level of efficiency because they did not have the IT resources to support their communications needs. By outsourcing the management of her key IT requirements, her company now has the level of enterprise grade mobility and communication needed to serve clients better.

Supporting Remote Workers

SpeakerBox Communications is based in Virginia, but they also have employees who work in Georgia. When they moved to a mobility platform using the BlackBerry solution the company was able to institute a teleworking policy.

Much of this approach came from a desire to help employees keep fuel costs down and to function as a company that supports environmentally friendly "green" policies. But it was also based on a philosophy that the company already had – that remote workers are part of a growing trend.

The decision to outsource their email and mobility infrastructure was an easy one for SpeakerBox. With hosted Exchange and Hosted BlackBerry services, they found the flexible, and robust solution with the security features they were looking for. "Having mobility at your fingertips helps people feel connected to the company, no matter where they work," says Shea. "It would have been so much harder to support remote workers without a hosted system." SpeakerBox was able to support its goal to offer teleworking to its growing user base, and have the comfort of knowing that the solution could scale as their company grows.

Now, a BlackBerry smartphone is on the top of the checklist of things remote workers need to do their jobs.

Making Connections to the Community

SpeakerBox now uses more mobile applications on their BlackBerry smartphones. They've become big advocates of mobile access to social networking applications such as Facebook® and Twitter™ as a business tool.

"If I didn't have Twitter on my BlackBerry smartphone, I wouldn't be taking advantage of a tool that's helping us with our client base," says Shea.

Shea uses her Twitter account to post Tweets that her clients can follow. She usually focuses on industry news or links to articles that would interest her clients. She considers this an important marketing tool and a way to stay top of mind with her clients, many of who also use Facebook and Twitter to share information.

"I was recently at a conference and I live Tweeted about the content in one speaker's presentation," she says. "In the new age of communications, it's nice that I can share this content with my community so easily from my BlackBerry smartphone."

For additional BlackBerry customer success stories,
visit www.blackberry.com/go/success

Summary of SpeakerBox Results

- A cost-effective way to manage mobility without needing in-house IT resources
- A way of managing disaster recovery and continuity of operations
- A more productive workforce, including the ability to support teleworking
- An enterprise class mobile solution that supports communication and social networking

"The expectation today is you can compute from your handheld. The BlackBerry smartphone gives us access to email, applications and all the information we need to serve our clients."

~ Elizabeth Shea, President and CEO, SpeakerBox



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