

Case Study

BlackBerry Helps Successful Adventure Tour Company Communicate Everywhere – from Jungles to Airports



Company: Chukka Caribbean Adventures is a tour operator in Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize, offering excursions such as horseback riding in the surf, jungle river tubing, canopy tours, hiking and jungle buggy experiences.

Industry: Services & Hospitality

Region: Caribbean

Company Size: Large Enterprise

Email Environment: Microsoft® Exchange

Business Challenge:

Reduce the dependence on expensive cell phone communications to keep company directors in the loop about tours and business plans.

Solution: BlackBerry® devices deliver "push"-based email and readable attachments to Chukka Caribbean directors and operations managers. Information flows quickly and cost-effectively.

Results:

- Reduced cell phone charges by 15% -20%
- Less paperwork
- Faster decision-making
- Improved quality of life



 BlackBerry™

Situation:

Operating an adventure tour company in Jamaica, the Bahamas and Belize means working in out-of-the-way places like jungles, where a power connection is hard to come by. For Chukka Caribbean Adventures that meant laptops were an awkward and unreliable means of communication. And even though they could often use cell phones, they were faced with extremely high airtime charges.

"Our first goal was to cut down on costs," says Alexander Melville, Finance and Information Systems Director. "We were looking for a better way to inform company directors about emergencies, like accidents on tours without having to call them all individually. Since we all travel a lot worldwide, those calls were getting very expensive."

They also wanted a way to reduce paperwork, such as lengthy faxes about problems on excursions and monthly business statements. Having to find a fax machine, while on the road, was always a challenge and slowed up important decision-making

Solution:

BlackBerry "Push"-based email replaces expensive cell phone calls

Chukka Caribbean knew they were onto something when they started using the convenience of email to inform everyone on their executive team about important events and information.

Because BlackBerry is a wireless extension of their Microsoft Exchange email mailbox, it allows them to send, receive, forward and reply to messages while integrating seamlessly with their existing enterprise email account. And with BlackBerry "push" technology, they don't need to retrieve their email. It finds them – without having to dial in, boot-up a laptop or find an Internet connection.

"I used to have a Sony Ericsson P900 handheld, but nothing beats the way BlackBerry handles email," says Melville. "My mail is just automatically there all the time. I don't have to hit 'send' or 'receive'. It's so simple."

Melville says one of their biggest challenges was being able to inform company directors about accidents that occurred on tours. Up to six people need to know at once, so they can start the appropriate wheels in motion. Having to call everyone was time-consuming and racked up expensive cell phone airtime.

But with BlackBerry, an operations manager at the location can now send accident information to the company directors at once, via email. Melville estimates that this more efficient process saves them 15%-20% on their previous cell phone bills.

"BlackBerry is unbelievable to us in terms of communications. You can send out one email to six people, rather than having to call them all individually. There is peace of mind in knowing that everyone is going to be immediately up-to-date."

~ALEXANDER MELVILLE, Finance and Information Systems Director

Better communications = faster decisions

But it's not just emergencies that need senior management input. Running one of the most successful adventure tour companies means the executive team has to travel worldwide. While they're away, business decisions still need to be made.

Melville says they take advantage of the ability to read attachments on the road. BlackBerry supports the ability to open and read popular formats such as Microsoft® Word, Microsoft® Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint® and Adobe® PDF. With their newfound access to information, Melville estimates that they are saving time and being more productive – making decisions in hours versus days.

"Even though we may be away from home, we can open a variety of documents like profit statements and reports and still be able to make decisions," says Melville. "It doesn't even matter if we are in different time zones, BlackBerry makes it easy for us to share important information that keeps our company competitive."

"The BlackBerry Enterprise Solution was straightforward to install into our IT infrastructure and the devices are just as easy to use. It was a no-brainer for us to choose it."

~ALEXANDER MELVILLE, Finance and Information Systems Director

User-friendly device helps balance life and work

One of the key considerations in choosing BlackBerry was its ease of use. "Many of our senior people are not IT savvy," says Melville. "A key success factor for us was whether anyone would use the device. We are all surprised to find out how easy it was to type with your thumbs. It is a much better approach than having to use a touch screen or remember how to write symbols."

The BlackBerry devices that Chukka Caribbean uses offers phone, email, SMS, browser, instant messaging and organizer applications, as well as Bluetooth® support for hands-free voice communications. Chukka Caribbean chooses to primarily use the email functionality to meet their needs. But is impressed with how BlackBerry stacks up against other devices in terms of battery life.

With a device that people want to use, Meville finds that the executive team is communicating more often – without overtly sacrificing their personal time. In particular, he uses the convenience of the device to stay home an extra hour in the morning with his children.

"I find I don't have to kill myself to get into the office," he says. "I can send information via the BlackBerry device in the morning, while my kids are getting ready to go to school. I manage my time better because I am not having to rush into the office to check my email."



Results

Reduced cell phone charges: Savings of 15%-20% by using email instead of phone calls to get information to company executives.

Less paperwork: The ability to send and receive attachments versus relying on faxes makes it easier to keep up on reports and offer quicker feedback.

Faster decision-making: Everyone stays in the loop which speeds up response times from days to hours.

Improved quality of life: Never being far from email means executives can balance work and home life.

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