

New in the Market



CyberShift

Interview conducted with Robert Farina, CEO.

Please tell our readers about CyberShift.

CyberShift offers work force management and expense management software and services that enable clients to dramatically enhance their ability to proactively manage and control the two largest variable costs for most organizations: labor and employee business expenses. By providing advanced Web-based products in a Software-as-a-Service or traditional license fee model, CyberShift's solutions can be delivered in the manner that best meets the business needs of our clients.

Leveraging a service-oriented architecture, CyberShift's work force management solutions include enterprise-level time and attendance, staff scheduling, travel and expense management, self-service functions and analytics. The product suite helps businesses optimize and manage the deployment of their people, reduce costs and improve processes across their operations. We're offering advanced technology, flexible deployment options and extensive expertise in the field of work force management plus we're also the first enterprise-class work force and expense management solution provider to offer solutions that are integrated with the BlackBerry platform.

It is no surprise that businesses today are facing more challenges accommodating an increasingly mobile work force. What are some of the biggest challenges and opportunities facing organizations when it comes to managing a diverse and mobile work force and their related travel and business expenses?

Frequent business travelers, field workers, telecommuters, remote branch office workers and multi-site workers are on the rise. As a result, there is increased corporate pressure to control and reduce costs and meet compliance demands. Organizations today need to support existing business processes, increase productivity, reduce costs and enable employees to rapidly respond to business needs and remain competitive – regardless of whether they are in or out of the office.

Although the trend toward a more mobile work force offers greater business opportunities, it also presents challenges as managers struggle to keep track of their work forces. And, Accounts Payable and Corporate Travel departments are challenged to keep employees synchronized with corporate policies and practices.

Realizing that the modern work force expects and requires always-on connectivity, and that employee business expenses and labor management-related functions, such as time capture and absence requests, are the top two controllable business costs for an organization, mobile enterprise applications provide the solution that enables employees to take the office – and access to their critical applications – with them.

Why has CyberShift decided to offer business applications on a BlackBerry platform?

Industry analysts predict a rise in work force mobility – increasing the need for mobile business applications. According to estimates from research firm IDC, the number of “mobile professionals” – white-collar workers who spend 20 percent or more of their time away from their desks – is growing by approximately 15 percent annually.¹ Likewise, Quocirca Research predicts a faster uptake of mobility for blue-collar workers.² Regardless of the type of work, mobile access can eliminate the inherent inefficiencies that are often associated with business travel.

We recognize that work force and expense management applications can touch virtually every employee in the organization. Travel and expense systems also touch every business traveler, remote worker and telecommuter. These mobile workers have the same pressures as on-site employees to comply with existing corporate policies, approvals and business processes. Part of our vision is to provide our customers with solutions that increase efficiencies, enhance productivity, facilitate compliance and are easy to use and easy to deploy for all employees. We chose the BlackBerry platform because it is the *de facto* standard in wireless communications for mobile professionals and used by thousands of organizations around the world.

With access to mobile technologies such as cell phones, laptops, BlackBerry smartphones and other PDAs, why is work force mobility still such a huge challenge?

One of the biggest challenges for mobile workers is accessing critical business applications remotely. Most deployed applications do not natively support mobility initiatives and only recently have organizations started to invest in technology and hardware to provide a stable and secure platform to the mobile population. Since the majority of critical business applications are only available through a PC connected to the corporate LAN and possibly intranet, many mobile employees are left detached from the information and applications they need to be productive and drive business success while they are out of the office.

Businesses are also vulnerable to the security risk of employees traveling with company laptops that may get lost

or stolen. Laptop theft is on the rise, leaving many businesses challenged by connecting mobile employees with the resources they need without compromising their business and information security. As a result, more businesses are actually restricting travel with company computers.

Another challenge is maintaining productivity levels for employees who are out of the office. Not only do workers lose productivity because they cannot access their desktop applications remotely when on the road, they lose productivity when they are in the office, because they're spending their time playing catch up rather than driving the business forward. Plus, delays and data synchronization issues can result in inaccuracies, compliance violations, payroll bottlenecks and violations in company policies.

How can organizations overcome these challenges?

With so many people on the move, providing greater support to employees who travel, are remote, or not in a traditional office setting is vital to their productivity and retention. By leveraging wireless and mobile devices and software, companies can empower their work force with direct access to mission-critical data where and when they need it.

Mobile handheld devices offer untapped business application potential, enabling workers to truly take their office with them anywhere they go. Using a BlackBerry device, users can gain fingertip access to critical applications that are necessary to keep the workflow moving and remain in compliance with corporate policies and procedures.

Unlike laptops that need to access an Ethernet or be within range of a wireless Internet connection, BlackBerry devices' wireless connectivity works from the warehouse floor to the airport lounge and everywhere in between, delivering an always-on connection that increases productivity and helps balance work and life. Even when a connection is not possible, such as on an airplane, BlackBerry applications can still allow a user to work disconnected. This platform's flexibility allows companies to justify their investment in mobile technology, expand the applications available for their mobile workers and ensure they are able to get their work done while on the road or at their convenience.

Now that mobile business solutions are made available, and users can access the travel and expense application from wherever they are, what is the benefit to the organization and end user?

Greater productivity! According to a recent Ipsos-Reid market research study, most BlackBerry smartphone users can turn 53 minutes of downtime into productive work time each day and BlackBerry smartphones can increase the efficiency of an entire team by nearly 30 percent.³ Likewise, companies that deploy integrated mobile business applications for work force and expense management can improve productivity, create efficiencies, and deliver better resource accessibility to their mobile work force. For business travelers and mobile employees, expense reporting and time and attendance work force management related functions are two of the most commonly required applications.

Using a mobile work force application, managers are able to perform real-time data capture of attendance and labor distribution and view all related transactions. While out of the traditional work place setting, managers can gain greater visi-

bility into their labor distribution, review and approve absence requests remotely, anticipate, and respond to scheduling changes to meet forecasted business demands or address issues with their work force.

For expense reporting, mobile applications release business users from the burden of preparing expense reports upon returning to the office. Instead, employees can be more proactive in managing their business expenses. They can maximize their time and create expense reports on their handheld device during downtime at the airport or immediately as the expense occurs. Through the mobile application, business travelers can review details of their corporate charge card transactions and include them along with their cash transactions on an expense report. Getting expense reports submitted in a timely manner improves data and reporting accuracy and enables managers to facilitate faster expense processing turnaround times.

What does the future hold for mobile work force and expense management automation?

Our customers can expect our continued commitment and dedication to developing and refining work force and expense management solutions that reduce costs, meet compliance demands while increasing efficiencies and productivity, enabling our customers to be more proactive in the management of their work force.

Our innovative solutions enable organizations to control the two largest variable costs for most businesses: labor and employee expenses. As work force mobility continues to escalate, CyberShift will be there to provide our customers with solutions that are easy to use and easy to deploy for all employees.

Endnotes

- 1 "Integrated Mobile Solutions," Vaultus White Paper, 2006.
- 2 Primary research data derived from an independent study conducted by Quocirca Research.
- 3 Ipsos-Reid Study as taken from RIM's Web site: <http://na.blackberry.com/eng/solutions/types/enterprise/>

About the Author



With more than 28 years of experience in successfully growing enterprise software and service businesses, Robert Farina, serves as chief executive officer of Parsippany, New Jersey-based CyberShift. Prior to joining CyberShift in 2002, Farina served as vice president of USInternetworking (now a part of AT&T); at that time, the largest publicly held application service provider (ASP) in North America. He joined USInternetworking through the sale of EnableVision, a highly successful software consulting and implementation firm which he founded. Prior to EnableVision, Farina was the CEO of a leading vertical market provider of enterprise software to the publishing industry, as well as vice president and general manager for a major firm focused on human resource and payroll systems. He began his career at Control Data's Business Information Services division. Farina is currently an active member of the Advisory Board of the Columbia University Master's program for Information Technology Management. He is a graduate of the Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania.