



## Network of accounting firms increases efficiency and responsiveness with BlackBerry solution

Exco is a leading French network of independent accounting firms. The network's 23 member firms provide auditing, fiscal and consulting services to over 53,000 clients around the country. Exco is also a member of Kreston International, a worldwide association of independent accounting and business advisory firms.

### The Challenge

To distinguish itself from its rivals, Exco focuses on providing highly responsive client service as well as quality work. "Our culture is to be very reactive to client requests," explains Jean Luc Beaughon, General Manager of one of the Exco network members. "When our clients have urgent questions we want to answer them quickly so that they won't think of asking someone else."

Today, email has become the main means of communicating with clients and team members at Exco. But without mobile email, it had become increasingly difficult for the network's 380 partners and chartered accountants to maintain contact with clients and co-workers while away from the office. Beaughon and other partners quickly spotted this problem and began looking for a solution.

### The Solution

Several of the network's member firms began surveying the market for a mobile email solution. The criteria for all of them was the same: advanced security, compatibility with the Exco's IBM® Lotus® Domino® email system, 'push' technology for mobile email and a handset that is intuitive and user friendly, all in one device. "We wouldn't accept having two solutions, one for mobile email and one for office email," said Beaughon.

### Benefits

More responsive client service

Win new business and long-term customer loyalty

Streamlined business processes

Improved team communications

After researching what was available on the market, only the BlackBerry® solution ticked all the boxes. In the space of a few months, several associates and fee earners were equipped with BlackBerry® smartphones running on a BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for IBM Lotus Domino. The BlackBerry solution's 'push' technology enabled real-time wireless access to email, calendar, contacts, and scheduling.

## The Benefits

According to Beaughon, the BlackBerry solution is perfectly adapted to the way the network's firms do business, "It puts me in charge of my communications by centralising everything on one device," he says. It provides a secure and reliable solution for all the firm's users, with immediate access to important information and communications.

A fee earner's portfolio is organised around their domain of expertise and not the client's location. This means fee earners often spend hours out of the office, visiting clients in all parts of the country. The BlackBerry solution lets them keep in touch via email with both clients and team members back in the office, while on the road. Furthermore, mobile access to the calendar, and wireless synchronisation, has eliminated scheduling conflicts.

Another benefit is that the company's voicemail system sends an email alert when someone leaves a message. So when the fee earner comes out of a meeting they can see all calls and emails, and manage them all immediately from their BlackBerry smartphone. Straight away their clients see that they are being well taken care of.

This responsiveness has had a positive impact on business, both for clients and office operations. "Although it's hard to measure, I can see that the BlackBerry solution will contribute to customer loyalty in the long term," says Beaughon, who adds that it has also generated new business in the short term. "Recently, because I was able to answer a client's email right away, I multiplied our volume of business with him by five," says Beaughon.

In addition, the BlackBerry solution has streamlined office operations, especially with employee processes. Beaughon explains, "Last summer a member of my staff resigned the day before my holiday. Instead of cancelling my holiday to interview candidates, I was able to manage the recruitment process from a distance using my BlackBerry smartphone and hire the replacement when I got back, so there was no interruption in service to our clients." This incident also showed the company that the BlackBerry solution has provided the partners with the ability to have a good work/life balance yet remain efficient with resources.

"The time savings generated by the BlackBerry solution are significant," concludes Beaughon. "It's perfect for the needs of accounting firms like ours."

[www.blackberry.co.uk/casestudies](http://www.blackberry.co.uk/casestudies)

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