



## French accounting firm improves responsiveness and flexibility while controlling costs with BlackBerry solution

FGEC, an accounting firm based in Paris, provides a wide range of accounting, consulting, tax, payroll and legal services to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

### The Challenge

FGEC prides itself on providing a high level of client service by being flexible and responsive to customer needs. The firm's staff is comprised of office-based experts and highly mobile fee earners, mainly certified accountants, who work together in multidisciplinary teams. The quality of FGEC's client service depends on the smooth coordination between team members, but as fee earners spent more and more time out of the office, lines of communications began to break down. Email messages would go unanswered for long periods and scheduling was prone to errors, resulting in a growing disconnect between office-based staff and fee-earners. When the latter were out of the office, they had no easy way to check their email or calendar.

Laurent Benoudiz, the firm's managing director, saw these issues were having a harmful impact on client service. "The main problem was the calendar," says Benoudiz. "When fee-earners were out of the office they didn't have access to their calendar. They would carry a printout, but it wasn't up to date. The only solution was to give them mobile access."

### The Solution

In 2006, Benoudiz decided it was time to deploy a mobile email and calendar solution. After surveying the options available on the market and polling his peers in the accounting profession, it quickly became clear that a BlackBerry® solution would provide the functionalities he was looking for while enabling him to control costs, which was an important criterion for a small firm.

"The people I talked to who were using non-BlackBerry solutions complained about costs associated with email delivery," says Benoudiz. "To reduce costs they would reduce the frequency of email synchronisation, which seemed to defeat the purpose of mobile email in the first place." BlackBerry® smartphone users, however, never complained about cost and were very positive about the devices and simplicity of deploying the solution.

### Benefits

Improved client responsiveness and flexibility

Streamlined project coordination

Improved team communications

Cost-effective operations

Simple, effective administration

With the help of his IT support provider, FGEC installed BlackBerry® Enterprise Server for Microsoft Exchange™ and equipped the fee-earners with a mix of BlackBerry smartphones. All of them use the solution for mobile email and calendar, with some users also using the BlackBerry smartphones for GPS navigation and web access as well.

## The Benefits

As expected, the BlackBerry solution solved the firm's calendar synchronisation problem. "Now we can see when everyone is available, and everyone is instantly notified of new meetings," says Benoudiz. "Setting up meetings with several people used to be complicated. Now it's immediate." This has resulted in better coordination between team members and improved flexibility and responsiveness to client requests.

Equally, BlackBerry mobile email has improved communications between office-based and mobile staff. Messages no longer go unanswered when fee-earners are out of the office. Also, thanks to the BlackBerry solution, the fee-earners no longer have to travel with their laptops. "Today, most of the communications with each other and with clients is email-based. With a BlackBerry in my pocket I can be out of the office for a couple days at a time, leave my laptop behind, and not miss a single e-mail," says Benoudzi.

Benoudiz is impressed by how simple the BlackBerry solution is to manage. "It's easy to administer. There's no need to have someone in-house to manage it. For example, even I can deactivate a smartphone if it gets lost, which is something that happened to me last year," says Benoudzi, who appreciates the built-in security of the BlackBerry solution. Finally, user take-up has been enthusiastic – almost too much so, "They all want the latest models!" comments Benoudiz.

"When you compare the cost of the BlackBerry solution to the service that it provides, it's very beneficial," says Benoudiz. He is convinced that the time saved by the BlackBerry solution more than offsets the modest monthly service cost. Moreover, the monthly budget is stable and predictable, even if email traffic is very intense, "We don't have those cost problems that the non-BlackBerry users warned me about." The BlackBerry solution has also generated other cost savings. Some of the fee-earners have stopped using separate mobile phones. Others, like Benoudiz, no longer have to use 3G cards with their laptops or pay for Wi-Fi access to check their email, which has helped to further reduce the firm's overall mobile phone costs.

"The BlackBerry solution is a very affordable service. It provides an exceptional return on investment in terms of productivity and client service. It's an excellent choice for SMEs," concludes Benoudiz.

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

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