

Case Study

Leading Retail Developer Relies on BlackBerry Technology for Innovative Sales Solutions

Tanger
Outlets

Company: **Tanger Factory Outlet Centers, Inc.** is a leading developer of manufacturer's outlet centers across the United States that features premier brand name and designer outlet stores.

Industry: Retail/Wholesale

Region: Americas

Company Size: Large Enterprise

Email Environment: IBM® Lotus® Domino®

Type of Solution: Business Intelligence, Workflow and Approvals (ERP)

BlackBerry Partner Solution: Custom application from Todd Herman Associates

Business Challenge: The company wanted to offer leasing agents a way to receive up-to-date leasing contact information on-the-go. They also wanted to wirelessly enable the company's purchase order and vendor approval system to expedite executive approval.

Solution: Using the proven BlackBerry Enterprise Solution®, Tanger's IT partner, Todd Herman Associates, developed two Lotus Notes® applications for BlackBerry® devices:

The applications included a contact database called Frontier that regularly pushes out updates wirelessly as well as a vendor/purchase order approval system.

Results:

- New solutions leverage existing technology investments
- Less reliance on paperwork and laptops
- Converged devices that do it all



The Challenge: Find Mobile Solutions to Manage Key Business Processes

Communicating while mobile is an ongoing challenge for senior personnel at Tanger Factory Outlets – one of the nation's biggest outlet mall developers. It's crucial for leasing agents, who are the frontline in tenant leasing, and executives, who must sign off on key spending decisions, to keep up with important business processes from the road.

"The sooner we can get information to the key people who need it and get that turned around, the sooner we can close deals, get business expenses approved and pay vendors," says Rick Farrar, Assistant Vice President of Information Technology.

To keep business moving, Tanger set two goals for its long-time IT partner, Todd Herman Associates. First, they wanted them to create a reliable way to wirelessly push contact data to leasing agents to maximize their access to current, deal-making information. Second, they wanted to simplify and speed up the way executives approved a daily onslaught of purchase orders and vendor approvals.

Both solutions needed to leverage their existing investment in BlackBerry devices and integrate with their Lotus Notes environment.

Why BlackBerry?

Until recently, Tanger mobile executives were dependent on laptops, cell phones and PDAs to keep up with corporate data. That meant juggling a variety of devices and not knowing with any certainty if information was current. For anyone that used a laptop, it meant finding time at conferences or between meetings to boot up, find an Internet connection and log in to the company's secure site.

"We had already rolled out BlackBerry devices for mobile access to email," says Farrar. "The stability of BlackBerry as a development platform made us realize that there was an opportunity to improve access to data, which could benefit both our executives and our leasing agents."

Tanger turned to Todd Herman Associates to extend the power of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution. Todd Herman Associates took advantage of the flexibility of the BlackBerry Mobile Data System™ as part of the BlackBerry Enterprise Server™ to allow secure access to corporate data from behind the firewall. Two Lotus notes applications were built to access SQL databases on the back end with BlackBerry devices.

"The BlackBerry platform was an obvious choice because of its security, stability and industry history," says Farrar. "BlackBerry has been an industry leader for some time."

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~RICK FARRAR, Assistant Vice President of Information Technology

Partner Profile:



Company: *Todd Herman Associates*

- Seasoned business consultants who guide companies in combining process improvement and technology for sustained results
- Celebrating more than 16 years of service, the company understands business processes and information systems
- Application development knowledge helps to extend client applications to BlackBerry technology

Featured Product: Custom application development

Application Type: Business Intelligence, Workflow and Approvals (ERP)

- Services:**
- BlackBerry application development
 - Lotus Domino application development
 - Systems integration
 - Workflow applications
 - Corporate performance management

Business Value:

"Todd Herman Associates is professional and knowledgeable and have worked with us since 1997. They do quality work and are there when we need them – they have all the things you are looking for in a partner."

Rick Farrar, *Assistant Vice President of Information Technology, Tanger Factory Outlets*

For more information, visit www.todderman.com

The Final Frontier for Leasing Agents

Tanger's leasing agents use Frontier, the contact management client application developed for their BlackBerry devices, to access property information wirelessly. This simple application replaced the previous method of getting at contact information via the company's accounting software.

"A lot of the agents would just print out a hard copy and take that with them," says Farrar. "With BlackBerry, they have all this information at their fingertips without all that paperwork."

When an agent launches Frontier on their BlackBerry device, they see a searchable list of their tenants and properties. But what makes Frontier unique is its customization to each leasing agent's region.

A Lotus Notes application was created for BlackBerry devices that would push out approvals according to a series of rules. Each agent sees only their own contacts, which maximizes their time with tenants.

"The agents have responded very well to this updated feature," says Farrar. "While they are at an airport or traveling, they can manage their tenants throughout the entire lease negotiation process. It has taken away a lot of the searching they used to have to do, which makes them more efficient."

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~RICK FARRAR, Assistant Vice President of Information Technology

Lotus Notes Application Customized for Executive Approvals on BlackBerry

Tanger vice presidents and senior management are required to sign off on almost a dozen purchase orders and vendor requests every day. These approvals can include everything from landscaping costs at a center to agreeing to add a new vendor to the supplier's list. When they travel, these approvals often have to wait until management can boot up a laptop and answer the email requests for approvals.

"Since Todd Herman had already built our purchase order system, it seemed obvious that some kind of wireless approval routing was the next step," says Farrar.

A Lotus Notes application was created for BlackBerry devices that would push out approvals according to a series of rules. The solution has built in logic so it knows by the dollar amount and established budget to indicate whether the purchase order can be approved right away, needs one level of approval, or requires two people to sign off. It then sends an automated email to the individuals who will be involved in approving the purchase order.

When an executive receives an email with an embedded link, they are taken to all the relevant information and click on a box to show whether they approve the purchase order. Tanger believes the user-friendliness of the system is making them more efficient in getting approvals and maintaining relationships with valuable suppliers.

"Before, when I was away, I'd end up doing all the purchase order approvals late at night on my laptop," says Frank Marchisello, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. "Waiting that entire day, or even up to a week, can make a big difference in business. We have definitely sped up the process so people aren't always waiting for us. Plus, I rarely need my laptop anymore."

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Results

Leverages Existing Technology Investments: By seeing the value of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution beyond email, Tanger was able to make the most of its investment and offer key business people a multi-functional business tool.

Faster Decision-making: A wireless approval routing system built for BlackBerry devices reduces delays in obtaining essential sign offs. Now, business doesn't grind to a halt even when people are out of the office.

Ability to Act on Sales Opportunities: Leasing agents gain a customized, searchable list of their contacts and tenants to help them manage deals and close faster on opportunities.

Less Reliance on Paperwork and Laptops: The need for hard copies of contact information has been eliminated. Executives dial in though their laptops less often, reducing the dependence on them, and causing Tanger to rethink the need for laptops for people that travel.

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