

Case Study

BlackBerry Solution Keeps Business Moving for Leading Retail Developer

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 to take advantage of emerging opportunities. They also wanted to wirelessly enable the company's purchase order and vendor approval system to expedite approvals of business transactions.

Solution: Using the proven BlackBerry Enterprise Solution®, Tanger's IT partner, Todd Herman Associates, developed two applications for BlackBerry® devices: Frontier – A contact database that regularly pushes out updates, and a vendor/purchase order approval system.

Results:

- Faster decision-making
- Better ability to act on sales opportunities
- Less paperwork and laptops
- Converged devices that do it all



The Challenge: Manage Key Business Processes While Mobile

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

"Our leasing agents are the sales force of the business," says Frank Marchisello, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer. "They don't just make a sales call on a tenant and then leave it to legal to take over. They have to negotiate details and maintain the business processes of getting new leases through the system."

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.

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 login to the company's secure site.

"I had already seen BlackBerry devices used by a lot of companies, particularly in the investment banking community," says Marchisello. "We decided that if that many people thought so highly of the device, we should look into it."

Tanger turned to Todd Herman Associates to extend the power of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution™ beyond email. 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 applications for the BlackBerry devices were built to access company databases.

"The BlackBerry devices can already do so much," says Marchisello. "Just having one piece of equipment that has email, phone, address book and calendar is a major improvement. Then the fact that we could simplify our business processes was the final decision-maker for us."

"Its so much easier to pull out the BlackBerry device and to know, when you look up someone's name, you can feel confident that the information is correct."

~FRANK MARCHISELLO, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

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 Rick Farrar, Assistant Vice President of Information Technology. "With BlackBerry, they have all this information at their fingertips without all that paperwork."

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

An application was created for BlackBerry devices that would push out approvals according to a series of established parameters. That way, the data in front of them is always the most accurate and up-to-date information. Each agent sees only their own contacts, which maximizes their time with tenants.

"It's so much easier to pull out the BlackBerry device and to know, when you look up someone's name, you can feel confident that the information is correct," says Marchisello.

"Many years ago it was the fax, and then email that we thought we couldn't do without-now it's BlackBerry."

~FRANK MARCHISELLO, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Improving the Turnaround Time for Executive Approvals

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 shopping center to agreeing to add a new vendor to the suppliers list. When they travel, these approvals often have to wait until management can boot up a laptop and answer the emails requesting approval.

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

An application was created for the BlackBerry devices that pushes out approvals according to a series of established parameters. Based on the dollar amount and established budget, the solution can tell 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 the company more efficient in getting approvals and maintaining good relationships with suppliers.

"Before, when I was away, I'd end up doing all the purchase order approvals late into the night on my laptop," says Marchisello. "Waiting that entire day, or even up to a week, can make a big difference in our 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

Faster Decision-making: A wireless approval routing system built for BlackBerry devices reduces delays in essential sign offs. Now, business doesn't grind to a halt even when people are out of the office. "Many years ago it was the fax, and then email that we all thought we couldn't do without – now it's BlackBerry," says Marchisello.

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

Less Need for Paperwork and Laptops: The need for hard copies of contact information has been eliminated. Executives also no longer dial into the corporate servers through a laptop as often, reducing the dependence on them and causing Tanger to rethink the need for laptops for some people who travel.

Converged Devices That Do it All: Since BlackBerry devices function as multi-purpose tools for phone, email, calendar and contacts, Tanger was able to scale down to one wireless device to do it all.

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