



# BlackBerry Wireless Corporate Data Access Puts Investors Ahead of the Competition

Essex Investment Management Company, a Boston-based investment firm, operates in an industry where making the right stock call can mean millions of dollars to their customers and their company. Their challenge: give Essex sales people first-hand access to critical information that fuels company growth, while also finding a data access solution that is secure, simple for the user, integrates into their existing IT infrastructure and meets budget mandates.

Essex were pleasantly surprised to discover that their existing Intranet was already compatible with one data access solution and the integration could be done in-house. The reason? BlackBerry® enabled with the Mobile Data Service (MDS) feature of BlackBerry Enterprise Server™.

Today, Essex enjoys numerous benefits with BlackBerry:

- Improved customer service that differentiates them in the financial market
- More effective sales teams armed with customized information
- Reduced purchasing costs
- Reduced IT costs
- Highly efficient management of their corporate data access solution



## Solution Overview

### Industry

Financial

### Situation

Essex sales teams traveling to clients for less than three days needed secure, real-time access to core company data, without having to carry cumbersome, expensive laptops.

### Company Profile

Essex Investment Management Company, LLC is a Boston-based investment management firm that specializes in growth equity investments on behalf of institutional and private clients.

### Solution

Essex placed BlackBerry 6710™ handhelds, powered by the BlackBerry Enterprise Server™ with Mobile Data Service (MDS), in the hands of every salesperson. MDS gave sales people secure access to internal Web pages customized with customer and company content. This new level of information access improved customer responsiveness and differentiated Essex in the market.

### Results

BlackBerry replaced Essex's dependence on laptops with a more cost-effective, convenient wireless solution. Additionally, seamless integration of BlackBerry with the Essex IT infrastructure meant the company avoided the investment in highly customized solutions.

In 2000, Essex implemented a BlackBerry pilot program with members of the IT staff, followed by a rollout of BlackBerry Wireless Handhelds™ to the company's frontline administrators, analysts and portfolio managers. When any Essex employee traveled, BlackBerry served as a corporate email solution, while laptops were mandatory for accessing attachments and prospectus's from the company's research database.

But the system was inelegant since it relied on the availability of dial-up on laptops - causing portfolio managers to complain about both the weight of laptops and the loss of precious time serving their customers.

Essex decided that a wireless solution with corporate data access was right for employees traveling for less than three days; longer trips still required laptops to enable updates to core research. The solution needed to have reliable customer support, scalability, advanced functionality, and had to meet FCC security guidelines. Their search for a wireless alternative came to an end with the BlackBerry 6710 equipped with the MDS feature.

"When Research In Motion (RIM) came out with the BlackBerry 6710, it was the answer to all our needs - and then some," says Randal Wilson, IT Assistant Vice President at Essex. "The Mobile Data Service enhanced everything that we could possibly want. It gave us the ability to get our internal data to the end user which is extremely important in today's financial sector."

## BlackBerry is the Right Call for Users and Management

Essex's primary concern was the ability of BlackBerry to deliver current corporate data that could be easily accessed by the end user. In their case, busy portfolio managers and analysts who can't spend the time learning complicated technology. They also wanted to be sure BlackBerry allowed cross-platform access to customer portfolios and investment prospectus's managed through a variety of applications, such as Lotus Notes.

Essex discovered that the MDS feature on the BlackBerry Enterprise Server meant information could be pulled from the company's Intranet and reformatted for easy reading on the BlackBerry handheld. All the user had to do was login to a specified Web page and they would be sent the most up-to-date customer information or market data.

"When our sales people go to a client, they now get real-time data and have the ability to show customers their portfolios on-the spot," says Wilson. "That is a huge differentiator for our company. Our customers are intensely watching their investments to maximize any and every opportunity. They want to know if they're meeting their benchmarks and now we have the ability to show them every bit of information we have."

Selling the users is only half the battle with new technology. The management team at Essex also needed to see clear return on investment. The IT group made the case that the BlackBerry with MDS would save the hard costs associated with the purchase of new laptops. Going forward, all portfolio managers and analysts would receive the BlackBerry 6710, which could be used on business trips up to three days. Their existing laptops would be placed in a pool, which employees could sign out for longer trips.

Management was sold once they discovered that the company would not need to buy any more laptops. They were equally impressed at the value of BlackBerry at one-sixth the price of a new laptop.

## BlackBerry and MDS Leverages the Company's Existing Network

BlackBerry and MDS also answered key IT concerns. In their search for a data access solution, the company considered hiring a third party developer to create a custom wireless application. But BlackBerry enabled them to use their existing hardware, which was already compatible with seamless integration of corporate data access. BlackBerry enabled with MDS provides http connectivity between the wireless network and an enterprise's Intranet.

"Before MDS came out, we were going to need to build another engine for access to data. We weren't sure if we were going to be able to use our Intranet," says Wilson. "A lot of the companies we spoke to wanted to build their own interface. But with MDS, as long as you have an Intranet, built on HTML, the MDS piece functions seamlessly. We just used our internal IT expert to integrate MDS within our existing Intranet."

## Seamless Implementation: An Invaluable Asset

Determining what the sales people were going to see on their BlackBerry handhelds once they logged in was the first step in implementation. Many users wanted to see everything on a 3 x 5 screen that they would see on desktop access to the same internal Web page.

Essex determined that BlackBerry users would see a scaled down version of the corporate data Web page. They would forgo the use of graphics, even though BlackBerry can accommodate images, to keep data transfer charges at a minimum. The format was changed to suit the smaller screen.

Wilson says one of the keys to their success was the advanced functionality offered through BlackBerry. Essex created what could be called their version of corporate data "speed dial." The user logged into information specifically customized to their needs without having to search through several screens. The IT group managed what data the end users received through the content specified on the login.

They then considered whether the information would be accessible through push or pull technology. Although they dreamt of pushing all information out to their traveling representatives, the reality of sending large volumes of information negated that option. Essex was also mindful of the higher usage costs involved in transmitting data and determined that their BlackBerry-enabled representatives would pull information, as needed, from the corporate database.

"I cannot stress enough that the implementation was extremely simple to do," says Wilson. "A lot of the set up is done directly through the BlackBerry handheld, which asks you what you want to see on your HTML browser. Encryption is taken care of. Everything is on the internal side of our firewall. It's all built."

## The Benefits are Clear

Throughout the process, Wilson says the experience of integrating BlackBerry and corporate data access was seamless, problem-free and the support from RIM has been professional and knowledgeable.

While the ROI associated with BlackBerry enabled with MDS remains anecdotal at this point, Wilson can point to numerous benefits:

- The ability to instantly access corporate data improves customer service and differentiates Essex in a competitive financial market
- Sales teams perform more effectively, making decisions and recommendations with the most current information customized to their needs
- Purchasing costs have been reduced: all sales people carry the BlackBerry 6710 - more costly laptops are held in a sign-out pool for group use
- Essex saved substantial investment costs and avoided the refit of their IT infrastructure
- Deployment and management of corporate data access is delivered at higher efficiency by IT staff

"BlackBerry has created what I would consider our biggest asset to date - corporate data access via MDS," Wilson concludes. "The implementation and functionality have been outstanding. For our firm, we were able to offer our users something unique: our own data wirelessly."

