

SHOULD YOUR OFFICE BE A BLACKBERRY?

Seeing a survey about using portable devices to access supply chain data, I started wondering about mobile access to supply chain data myself, and wondering if there is any real need for it.

Perfect timing. I talked to a customer of ours in a South American country; he needs status reports on our shipments to him from Asia. Then I discovered that his office is a "BlackBerry". So, for this reason, I honed in on the BlackBerry and what it could do.

When I searched on "BlackBerry" and "EDI"; the first answer took me to Amosoft. From "BlackBerry Ap World": Amosoft is a leading provider of EDI services and EDI solutions. They claim to be the world's first Mobile EDI solution provider. Their Mobile EDI solution will let you stay in touch with your EDI vendors when you are on the go and be in full control of your business EDI transactions.

Next I discovered that CyberShift offered EDI documents to BlackBerry folks (in conjunction with SPS Commerce). They offer true anytime, anywhere access for your road warriors and other employees that spend a significant amount of their time on the job outside of a formal office.

Next, I looked at what BlackBerry was all about. Used by thousands of organizations around the world, the BlackBerry platform is the de facto standard in wireless communications for mobile workers. The BlackBerry provides a secure, robust and existing corporate standard platform for the enablement of critical functions of enterprise applications for mobile workers. Corporations today are facing increased requirements and challenges to enable and empower their mobile workforce. These challenges go beyond delivering Internet or email access to mobile workers to providing select, critical business applications to this user community in a consistent, secure and robust deployment. The goal of these efforts is to bring the enterprise applications to these mobile workers wherever they are rather than forcing the mobile workers to the enterprise applications.

There are two main BlackBerry smartphone mobile connectivity options, and they are quite different. The first is the BlackBerry Internet Service, in which your mobile carrier acts as a liaison between your email and your BlackBerry smartphone. The second option is to use a BlackBerry Enterprise Server, which directly links your wireless device to your email, contacts, calendars and business applications—virtually automatically and almost instantly. If you're using a BlackBerry smartphone solely for personal email, then a BlackBerry Internet Service account is all you need, and you can stop reading here. But if you're a business user and are only using BlackBerry Internet Service, you're leaving lots of important functionality unused.

Nobody really told me "what's behind the curtain", but it seems they are selling "cloud services", but only to BlackBerry people. Does that then qualify them as a "private cloud"?