

British American Tobacco Builds SAP® Intelligence into Its Executives' BlackBerry® Smartphones



THE QUESTION:
Will The Users Come?

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British American Tobacco, RIM BlackBerry smartphones and Mobile Workplace from 3i Consulting boost the productivity of globe-trekking executives

A market visit in Morocco, a strategy review in Spain, a conference in Cannes. If you can't imagine waking each morning and wondering which country you're in, a career as a global executive with British American Tobacco is not for you.

Fortunately for British American Tobacco's senior managers, they have a powerful ally at their London headquarters: Head of Headquarters IT David Sampson. In June 2006, Sampson embarked on an ambitious 15-month initiative to connect British American Tobacco executives with each other, their office and their families. Only a multi-functional, wallet-sized mobile wizard would do.

"When you're busy traveling from place to place, using a laptop is sometimes impractical or undesirable," Sampson says. "It should be easy for people to do what they want, when they want. To offer that freedom, we chose the BlackBerry®."

In the classic 1989 film *Field of Dreams*, an inner voice instructs the main character, Ray Kinsella, to build a baseball field in his remote Iowa cornfield. The Voice tells the puzzled Kinsella, "If you build it, he will come." Sampson knew that British American Tobacco executives wouldn't come on board with his vision unless he delivered applications on the RIM® BlackBerry smartphone that his users couldn't resist.

"Our executives have multidimensional roles, as decision makers, collaborators, corporate employees, fathers, mothers, friends, spouses and individuals," Sampson notes. "We've provided them with mobilized applications that appeal to them in these many roles. Our people can use their BlackBerry smartphones to conduct business, collaborate with colleagues, get access to key information, or equally to arrange supper, talk to their partners or arrange their personal lives via the Web."

Sampson's approach to mobilizing business in today's hectic environment is altogether human. To encourage adoption of the BlackBerry smartphone, he insisted that the device offerings appealed to executives as individuals as well as business players. His push for cultural change quickly took root: 98% of senior managers who use their BlackBerry smartphones on the road approve of them.

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Deploying Brain Power

When British American Tobacco executives journey to their end markets and factories spread over five continents, they continue to oversee the company's vast network of operations. Their employees need them to provide leadership, make critical business decisions and to be available to give key management approvals.

Sampson points out, "If you've ever worked one week in Mali and the next in Singapore, you know what it's like to catch up when you return home. The last thing you want when you're back in the office is someone tapping on your door and asking you to approve a bunch of requests."

With the goal of minimizing these "needless hassles," Sampson began exploring applications executives could use to manage nagging but essential administrative tasks through their BlackBerry smartphones, including mobilizing business processes in the SAP® solution, British American Tobacco's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

Of the many SAP activities Sampson considered, two stood out: line-item shopping cart approvals and employee development and performance reviews.

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Failure to take swift action on a purchase can disrupt British American Tobacco's supply chain, delaying purchases and exposing the company to risk. And when key HR approvals are delayed, employees can become frustrated and deadlines missed.

"When all these little tasks accumulate, they create real pain points," says Sampson. "If our managers clear down these tasks while they're traveling, they can return to the office with fewer distractions and can focus on making critical decisions and engaging in productive business conversations."

Sampson believes that mobilizing these business processes via BlackBerry smartphone provides British American Tobacco with a powerful management platform. He says, "It enables our executives to perform more value-added activities when they return to the office. A big part of this initiative is about the strategic deployment of brain power."



Searching for Simplicity

British American Tobacco already possessed extensive mind share in the SAP solution, BlackBerry Enterprise Server (BES) and BlackBerry smartphone development. But Sampson realized that the quickest way to reach the end game was to engage a resource with deep expertise in all three technologies.

Through a comprehensive selection process, British American Tobacco narrowed down the list of competing vendors to six. The candidates' implementation approaches boiled down to two methods: Java-based clients and browser-based solutions.

"The Java-based deployments introduced more complexity and licensing issues, as well as a significant middleware layer," says Brett McLatchie, a project manager on the British American Tobacco review team. "From a support perspective, the BlackBerry browser is much easier to manage."

Due to narrow bandwidth considerations, a primary requirement was high performance. British American Tobacco's busy executives would never adopt a solution that responded slowly or required a long and complex sequence of actions.

"Our final choice would have to perform as well as the SAP desktop application," McLatchie says. "No slowdowns were acceptable."

Also high on the list of concerns was security. SAP transactions are internally critical and sensitive business processes. Not surprisingly, British American Tobacco's and RIM's security standards are renowned for their rigor.

But to receive Sampson's blessing, the winning candidate also had to be able to deploy its solution quickly and cost-effectively.

Voting for Speed, Security and Reduced Complexity

Most vendors promised they could build a prototype in about 40 days. Based on its previous experience in deploying applications using the SAP solution and BES environments, 3i Consulting assured British American Tobacco it could deliver a prototype with its Mobile Workplace product in half that time.

"Mobile Workplace offered us elegant simplicity in terms of architecture, design and deployment," says McLatchie. "That meant significant cost savings. We loved that."

Most of the solutions proposed would sit side-by-side with the SAP solution. Mobile Workplace gained a leg up on the competition because it operates within the SAP solution and natively leverages SAP's powerful security infrastructure.

McLatchie notes, "Because Mobile Workplace resides completely within the SAP solution, it does away with any security issues. That created tremendous confidence."

In a few weeks, 3i unveiled a prototype as promised. It enabled users to log in to their SAP Workplace Inboxes and review their employees' performance review documents. Sampson was impressed.

"3i's ability to prototype quickly was absolutely necessary, and they delivered on that promise," Sampson says. "And what they came up with was much more than a mockup. It was a working version of the application."



Implementing Mobile Workplace

With 3i standing in the winner's circle, British American Tobacco launched the SAP mobilization project with a team led by McLatchie, British American Tobacco solution architect Laurence Dale and 3i senior consultant, Mark Pyc.

After translating British American Tobacco's requirements into design documents, the team focused on mobilizing users' capability to log in to the SAP solution via their BlackBerry smartphones to update and process employee documents. Within the SAP server, Pyc configured a workflow patterned on the browser-based version of the SAP® ERP Human Capital Management (SAP ERP HCM) application that executives worked with on their desktops.

Adhering to British American Tobacco's strict security standards, Pyc leveraged SAP's audit trail that clearly records every user transaction. During this process, the team realized they had overlooked a crucial function during the requirements phase: the users' ability to reset their passwords. Pyc quickly remedied the problem. "This is a great example of 3i's flexibility," Sampson says. "They were able to deliver this functionality in such a short amount of time. It was really astonishing."

Next, 3i had to configure the BES server to provide end-to-end communications between the SAP solution and users' BlackBerry smartphones. In the midst

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of this effort, Pyc discovered that British American Tobacco ran multiple BES domains. The challenge: Mobile Workplace was designed to work with only one BES domain. The success of the project pivoted on 3i's ability to adapt quickly and develop a version of Mobile Workplace that would deliver this critical functionality.

After requesting that 3i enhance Mobile Workplace, the team members held their breath. In a few days, 3i's developers extended the Mobile Workplace core product to operate seamlessly within British American Tobacco's infrastructure. Breathing a collective sigh of relief, the team moved forward, on schedule.

During user acceptance testing, the team verified that Mobile Workplace placed no significant load on the British American Tobacco wide area network, the SAP solution or BES. The footprint left by the application also was quite small, ensuring that maintaining it and extending it in the future would be easy.



Implementing Mobile Workplace

Additionally, McLatchie found that the SAP ERP HCM employee review functionality on the BlackBerry smartphone operated just like the desktop application, and with excellent response time and easy navigation. Says McLatchie, “Mobile Workplace’s processes on the BlackBerry are so straightforward. Every piece of information our users need to make decisions is right there.”

While implementing the HCM functionality, the team also began working on the SAP® Supplier Relationship Management (SAP SRM) processes that would allow users to approve shopping carts, line-item by line-item if required.

Again, 3i faithfully replicated the desktop application’s workflow and look and feel on the BlackBerry smartphone. The result was a fully functional user experience that was incredibly streamlined. “3i did an incredible job in terms of branding,” says McLatchie. “They matched the familiar icons from the desktop application to the BlackBerry interface perfectly. What 3i came up with is really quite slick and easy for users to work with.”

Before the team could release Mobile Workplace, it had to clear one last hurdle: transitioning the application to British American Tobacco’s service and support department.

“At first, we were worried that handing off Mobile Workplace to our support team would be a nightmare,” McLatchie says. “Our SAP support team had no experience with supporting BlackBerry, and the BlackBerry team had little experience with supporting the SAP solution. But the team was completely satisfied and agreed to support it—after only a two-to-three hour meeting!”

The implementation—from design and configuration to testing and release—progressed over several months. But the net time spent on integrating Mobile Workplace totaled only six weeks.

“3i provided high value based on speed-to-deploy and the related cost savings,” says McLatchie. “A year and a half ago, achieving all these goals for the project seemed quite scary. But I’m proud to say we delivered it.”

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The Results

Today British American Tobacco executives are now connected to SAP SRM and SAP ERP HCM through their BlackBerry smartphones. They meet the needs of their employees and suppliers more efficiently. And when they return to London, fewer employees circle their offices wielding stacks of approvals.

According to a 2007 study by market research firm Ipsos Reid, companies realize substantial value when employees manage productivity tasks on their BlackBerry smartphones. For each person earning \$100,000, the amount of downtime recovered in terms of annual salary is \$12,500.

“With the ability to manage business more effectively via the BlackBerry, our executives have increased their productivity dramatically, using dead time far more effectively and given them wider choices about when, how and where they want to work” Sampson says.

Quantitative results are outstanding – the average turnaround time for procurement approvals is cut by 40% when managers use their BlackBerry instead of waiting until they are back in the office.

British American Tobacco has been able to avoid incurring training expenses with the intuitive Mobile Workplace. Sampson says, “The applications developed through Mobile Workplace are so simple to use, no training was needed; none whatsoever.”

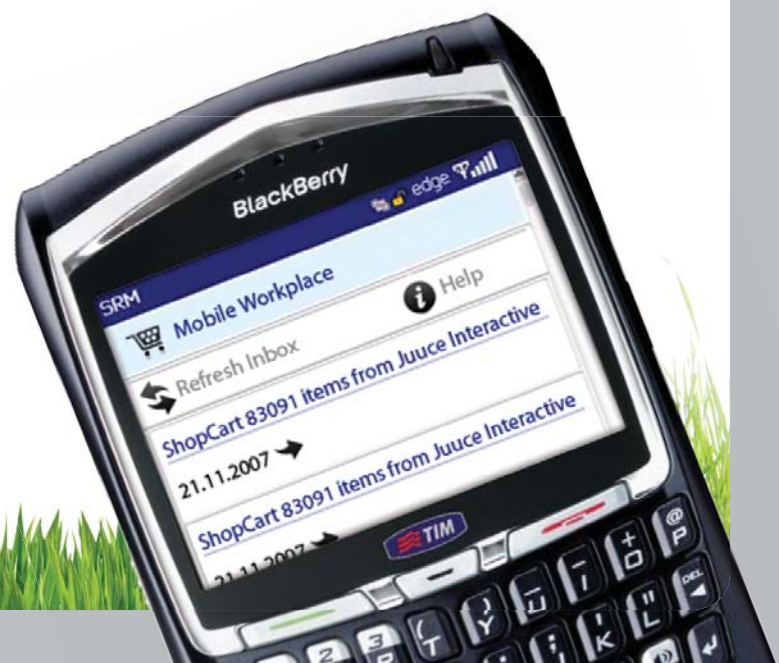
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Sampson looks forward to providing even more SAP functionality to his mobile clients. With Mobile Workplace, he will be able to fulfill that dream; the application enables British American Tobacco to roll out any SAP business process rapidly to any British American Tobacco HQ executive.

When David Sampson thinks about the role of his executives in this fast-moving global business and the precious time restored to them by British American Tobacco’s mobile suite of applications, he recalls a quote from Field of Dreams – “Ease his pain”.

“Our executives come from all walks of life and many countries around the world. Now, wherever they are, whenever they choose to work, we feel that we’re easing their pain, making their lives easier and, crucially, making the wheels of this global, dynamic and progressive organization turn more smoothly and effectively.”

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