

## Hand-held Technologies for the Mobile Workforce

Manufacturers are coming out with new devices to make you more productive in the office and on the road.

By Martha O'Connell



Even the most tech-challenged users will be intrigued by new hand-held devices and services coming on the market. They'll help you convert the hours you spend outside the office from wasted to productive time.

Imagine not being bombarded with requests from colleagues and customers the second you walk in the door. Instead, you answered them in your car, on the plane, or when you were sitting around waiting on another appointment. The effect snowballs – if you keep the work flow moving, others depending on you can, too.

Devices providing computer, Internet or phone access also can be a saving grace since nobody can be in two places at once. Personal digital assistants (PDAs) and sophisticated phones enable an immediate response and even let users hook into a “live” meeting while they're traveling.

“These devices can go in your pocket and they are just super convenient,” says Mike Carpenter, president of Amco Smallwares, a Division of Focus Foodservice, Vernon Hills, Ill. “They're not that tricky to learn; the basic stuff is pretty intuitive.”

*NAFEM in print* popped down to McCormick Place, Chicago, to check

out the SUPERCOMM 2005 show in June. It's the premier communications technology infrastructure show where more than 600 exhibitors showcase their new products. Here are some of the latest technologies to keep you connected to employees and customers.

### Personal Digital Assistants

These compact, wireless power packs combine multiple capabilities such as cell phone, computer functions, Internet access, organizers (appointment calendars, to-do lists, address books, etc.) and typing capabilities for notes and messaging. PDAs such as BlackBerry, Motorola, Treo and many more, have really evolved since their beginnings into sophisticated mini-machines combining multiple functions displayed in high-res color.

“I seldom carry a laptop any longer,” says John Nackley, CEO/President of InterMetro Industries Corp., Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Instead he uses his BlackBerry for e-mail, phone, task list, calendar and Internet access to check/book travel schedules, news and stocks.

“It is an incredible timesaver, especially when I'm out of the office. I can stay current with e-mails. I don't have

to return to my room in the evening and spend time answering questions and requests that came in during the day. The timeliness issue is significant because you can provide rapid response to requests and speed the pace of business,” he says.

For the foodservice industry, possibilities abound for storing and retrieving pertinent information. Enter sales orders on the spot; review up-to-date inventory and pricing history on the road; access Web sites in real time; collect sales and purchasing data during an inspection and automatically enter it into a master system. These are only a few of the applications and the lines are quickly blurring between all the functions various PDAs can perform.

### Smartphone

These devices keep getting more and more intelligent as new functions continue to be added. Smartphones from such companies as Treo, Nokia, Motorola, Sony Ericsson and many more, combine a cell phone with a mini computer in a flip-phone style or traditional one-piece “candy bar.”

In addition to e-mail, smartphones contain organizers and travel information so users can keep a calendar, to-

do lists, obtain flight schedules, convert currency and retrieve many other types of data. Songs, videos and pictures can be transferred to a smartphone from a PC and some smartphones include digital cameras.

## VoIP

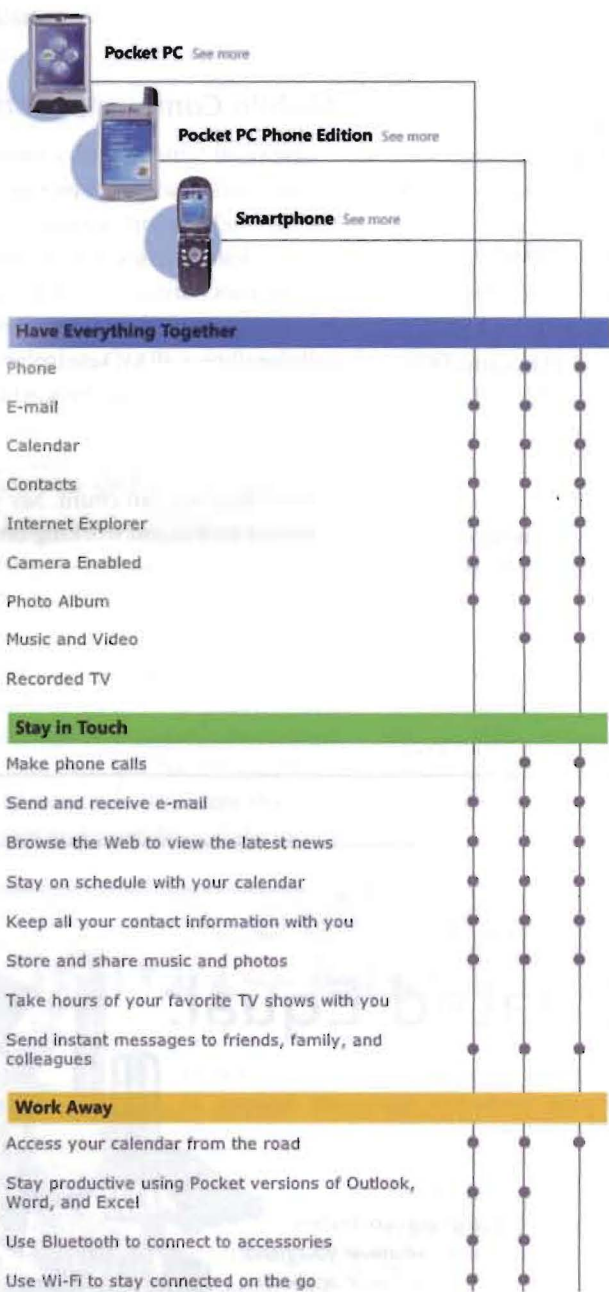
Short for Voice over Internet Protocol, VoIP could turn traditional land-line phone service on its head. VoIP sends *your* voice over a high-speed Internet connection, bypassing traditional land lines. It is an emerging technology, but the newest evolutions have recently been introduced.

Early versions have VoIP providers making their money in various ways. Some collect flat monthly fees from customers, with calls within the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico free and nominal charges (in most cases, .10 cents a minute) for calls overseas. Others have revenue-sharing plans with the infrastructure "cell" companies with whom they partner, so your VoIP calls everywhere in the world (that have Internet access) are free after your usual Internet connection rate. Businesses can negotiate different price structures for enterprise apps.

VoIP providers have now figured ways to get the technology into devices that remotely access the Internet. Different VoIP providers make the technology work by different means, using devices such as adapter boxes or downloadable Internet software, which are intended as one-time equipment purchases to set up VoIP. Then you need headsets and microphones to plug into your PC ports or cell phone. You've probably heard of Vonage, one of the first Internet-based cell phone providers. Now several companies, including TelTel and Skype, let you download software (TelTel is free) onto your computer or Internet-enabled PDA, plug in a

## Compare Devices

Need help finding the right Windows Mobile-based device?



Go to [www.microsoft.com/windowsmobile/devices/compare.aspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsmobile/devices/compare.aspx) for a great comparison grid of hand-held capabilities.

microphone (most PCs and PDAs have ports) and call anywhere in the world for no additional charge. Since the technology overrides traditional wired phone service, phone costs are dramatically reduced. For callers with huge long distance and international phone bills, VoIP could be a huge

boon because the Internet does not distinguish between local and long-distance calling.

## Seamless

Soon it will be possible to carry the same phone call or video or music to different locations, uninterrupted. No

# Anatomy of...

more, "let me call you back on my cell," or "can I call you from my land line?" Watching CNN on T.V.?

Seamless technology from Motorola lets you take the program to your car to listen over the radio and to your PC (full video again) back at the office.

"Seamless" technology transfers phone calls, videos or even conference calls automatically between phones, car radios, hand-held PDAs and PCs. How? A chip built into the cell phone serves as a location tracker and automatically makes the "transfer" without any action on your part.

For those constantly on the move between work, the car and home, automatic call/video transfer means you won't have to redial in order to reconnect. Seamless technology also gets talkers off their cell phones when a land line or VoIP line becomes avail-

able – so costlier cell phone package minutes aren't used.

## Mobile Communicators

We're all familiar with camera phones which send still pictures. Now, the MobileMonitor™ system from Cenuco lets you view restaurants, warehouses, offices, your home, etc., in a real-time video stream over your cellular phone, PDA, smartphone, or PC from anywhere in the world.

Introduced at the beginning of this year, this technology has more applications than we can count. Say you're a service technician working on a piece of equipment in a restaurant. Rather than trying to verbally describe a problem or part to the factory or home service office, you can send a live private video stream to any late-model cellular device or remote PC.

Those on the other end can see what you're trying to describe and send you back a live video solution to your cellular handset or PC from the factory floor. Restaurant operators could take live video of equipment problems and send them to the service techs without having to wait for the tech to arrive. How about a live-stream video conference call? The system also allows additional users to view the private video channels by downloading the cellular software and entering a password.

Hand-held technologies are changing at a fantastic rate. Surf the Web and do a little homework. To make the smartest buy, begin by determining what you need your hand-held to do without getting too caught up in features you may never use. If the technology confuses you, no problem, just ask your kids for help. ☞

## All Solutions Are Not Created Equal.

Whether it's a cooking, warewashing or data communications challenge, your first-class foodservice equipment deserves an optimal thermal solution. Year after year, Watlow has remained the leading thermal loop supplier to commercial kitchen OEMs.

NAFEM DP (Data Protocol) compliant controllers, superior heating and sensing solutions – whatever your need, Watlow is the single source able to cover your application from freezer to plate. And, with years of foodservice and on-line kitchen expertise, Watlow provides the know-how, innovation and resources to ensure exceptional food quality and customer satisfaction.

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SERIES N7  
controller

Watlow's products for foodservice equipment include cooking computers, controllers, tubular heaters and cast-in heaters.