## SThe Green Sheet

The Financial Services Industry Source for Education, Inspiration and Actionable Advice

### March 24, 2003 Issue 03:03:02

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### Sharing the Results

e have completed our financial review of 2002 and the results of our readership survey are back, and both tell us that it was a record year for The Green Sheet. I wish to thank everyone who took the time to mail back your ideas or to answer our questions online. This feedback each year helps us continue to bring you the content you need and make the changes you suggest.

Just as your business has had to adjust to the current economy, so has The Green Sheet. We all know that the U.S. economy is in the doldrums; what you may not know is that one of the harder-hit segments of this downturn has been magazine publishing. Ad sales are down dramatically, subscription sales have plummeted, long-established titles have folded and magazine launches are few, with new mastheads disappearing after a few issues. However, we have bucked the trend at The Green Sheet so far.

Our mission is to provide payment-

See RESULTS on Page 6

### Notable Quote:

It's a whole new world in the payment industry. ... Real opportunities exist for ISOs to differentiate their services on much more than price. It's about value, it's about speed and it's about new revenue streams.

See Story on Page 18

# appreciated.

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The Green Sheet is FREE to ISO / MSP Sales Professionals\* If you are not an ISO/MSP as defined below, an annual subscription fee of \$125 includes 24 issues of The Green Sheet and 4 issues of GSQ. Please call 800-757-4441 to request a subscription form, or visit www.greensheet.com \*Any Sales Professional who sells financial services to the retail merchant marketplace.

Any questions regarding information contained in The Green Sheet should be directed to the Editor in Chief at (800) 757-4441. The Green Sheet is a semi-monthly publication. Editorial opinions and recommendations are solely those of the Editor in Chief. In publishing The Green Sheet, neither the authors nor the publisher are engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. The Resource Guide is paid classified advertising. The Green Sheet is not responsible for, and does not recommend or endorse any product or service. Advertisers and advertising agencies agree to indemnify and hold the publisher harmless from any claims, damage, or expense resulting from printing or publishing of any advertisement.

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### Check It Out Online

I'm looking for background information on the payment industry in general and paper checks specifically:

- Size and breakdown of the payment industry.
- Paper checks as a source of bank revenue.

• Info on the extent to which electronic payment systems have been stealing share from checks.

Thanks very much for your help,

Todd Federman

### Todd,

Go to our Web site, www.greensheet.com. You can search for this information, but you might want to narrow the parameters. All of our issues are available online. Of particular interest to you might be the GSQs that were check studies.

> Good Selling! The Green Sheet Staff

### Full Disclosure, or Risk Exposure

I have been in the bankcard industry for about five years and approach it differently than most others. I have seen my fair share of merchant abuse by processors and sales representatives. BUT I also have seen good processors who do business ethically.

The Green Sheet has been very valuable to me. You really do walk a fine line. It's important that The Green Sheet never can be accused of supporting bad processors and bad sales representatives. In my opinion, this industry is going through a metamorphosis for the bet-



ter, not unlike what the insurance business experienced in the early 1980s.

If we always do full disclosure to the merchant and he/she decides to do business with us, then we are that much closer to truly being professionals.

> Sincerely, David Buffington AMG Financial

### How to Make Private-label Payroll Cards

I've just read Eric Thomson's interesting article in the February 10, 2003 issue of The Green Sheet ("Visa's Vision: 'Credit is Boring ... We're an Electronic-payment Company," issue 03:02:01). I'm interested in making a private-label Visa or MasterCard payroll card. Would you be able to assist me in finding a sponsoring bank and a good processor?

> Alex Nouri President EFT Direct

#### Alex,

The new Visa/MasterCard stored-value card program offers an ISO organization such as EFT Direct a number of options on how to bring the product to market. You can lead with a program provided by a third-party processor, major payroll processor or some of the large acquirer organizations.

Given the importance of payroll to every company, I suggest you look into your satisfied-customer base for clients who have significant turnover and un-banked employees. Explain the many benefits of a bank card-branded, ATM network paycard, document their requirements and ROI justification and then take this opportunity to bid from the many options available to you. Create a satisfied client that you can reference sell and then expand your portfolio from this base.

> Good selling! Eric Thomson

Page 5

#### RESULTS from Page 1



processing sales professionals with the information, education and inspiration you need to create wealth, for yourselves and the businesses you serve. With that in mind, our success as a "magazine publisher" is in truth the report you have issued on how well we have carried

out that mission.

#### What the Report Tells Us

From January 1 through December 31, 2002, our printpublication subscription numbers increased 11%. The Green Sheet Online has had an even more robust growth year. At the end of 2002 our Web site traffic had doubled over the previous year. Whether you count hits, visits or pages downloaded, our online statistics show a 200% increase from January 2002 to January 2003. We now average 1.5 million hits per month to www.greensheet.com. That's 50,000 hits per day. In short, we have the highest readership of anyone in the industry at about 40,000 monthly readers, and it is audited for both paper and electronic formats.



While The Green Sheet began its life as a newsletter, at its current size and content it has admittedly become a magazine.

The Green Sheet's quarterly four-color magazine "GSQ" has the entire industry as a target. With the ability to be more comprehensive in the material and focus on a single topic, the GSQ has found a niche of its own in the payment arena.

The Green Sheet, published twice a month, has continues to be true to the independent sales agent as its only target. While the Green Sheet continues to have broad readership outside the sales bull's-eye, the focus on what salespeople are thinking and reading drives interest beyond the target audience.

The debate over how many salespeople there are in the market continues. Perhaps the registration of individual sales representatives with the newly founded sales union, National Association of Payment Professionals (NAPP), eventually will solve the puzzle.

Even though I know that some in the industry put the sales representative number as high as 25,000 or more, I see the questions much differently because I have been looking at our readership and our database for nearly 20 years. In fact, I see the ETA meetings as an excellent barometer to the industry's size as a whole. At each ETA meeting, it is clear that the number of acquirer, bank, leasing company, check company, equipment manufacturer, etc. employees, outnumber the sales individuals by a significant margin.

I further see that regardless of whether you believe the number of sales professionals in the industry is large or small, everyone must agree that the marketplace grows and shrinks daily. The number of people who come to work briefly in the industry has helped exaggerate the totals over time, and while many of these individuals continue to receive mailings from the industry (very few cancel), they are essentially inactive.

Terminology also has been an obstacle in trying to get to the actual numbers. I believe the number of ISOs is between 9,000 and 10,000, which may represent an individual salesperson or a number of individuals working collectively.

Our original term "ISO," by which we mean Independent Sales Organization or Agent, has continued to be our measuring stick. This number is large as it compares to those who are members of the ETA or who have registered with Visa or MasterCard, but it is small when compared to the number of people who have ever worked in the industry. It also is enlarged by the number of *employ ee* salespeople in organizations such as TeleCheck or FDR.

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The truly important question in my mind is not how many sales professionals there are, but whether they are being reached. From an industry advertiser's perspective, there are only about 1,800 ISO "buyers/decision-makers" in the industry, and reaching beyond it provides no

additional sales opportunity. Whether you count unregistered organizations (individuals), as we do, at about 9,500 or as Visa does, at about 1,000, or the number of salespersons at about 25,000, very few make the buying decisions.

Are there many, many more individuals working in the industry? Of course, and they increase the attendance at industry events and readership of many publications, but they are not the individuals or organizations that an advertiser is looking to reach.

We think that the advertisers in The Green Sheet understand these important points and have continued to place their advertising dollars in the place that it has a return – The Green Sheet. This in turn has allowed us to grow its support for the sales professional, bring you an ever increasing amount of free content and services. Advertising in The Green Sheet grew by 52% last year! Perhaps you've noticed the larger page count. The advertising support for our publications enables us to provide our services to sales professionals at no cost. This increased revenue has enabled us to broaden our industry coverage, deepen our editorial staff and enhance our Web site presence.

Of course, one of our management assumptions is that increased ad sales DEMANDS increased editorial copy (more ADS = more WORDS). Participants in the online ISO Forum and Letters to the Editor consistently have referred to our publications as "the Bible" and the "Holy Grail" of the industry. We really appreciate the accolades. We strive to be your portal to the payment-processing information you need. Our advertisers come to us to build their sales channel through you!

### 2002 Reader Survey

We received a wonderful response from our subscriber base to our annual survey, enabling us to report a statistically valid response that is representative of our subscribers as a whole. The data has been combined for the paper and online readership. (Totals may not equal 100% because of individual non-response or multiple responses.)



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#### Who reads The Green Sheet?

We asked readers to identify what type of company they work for:

- ISO/MSP (Sales Organizations and/or Agents) ......74%
- Bankcard Acquirer/Processor ...7%
- Equipment Manufacturer/VAR .. 2%
- Other .....11%

### Within these companies our readers fulfill the following positions:

- \* Many independent salespersons checked this category

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary in 2003, we can see the results of managing our subscription database over our extensive tenure. We have succeeded in reaching the "feet on the street" in an unprecedented way.

### **Readers Rate the Articles**

Ongoing feedback from our readership has been impera-



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Qualified with most major Processors Visit our website at: www.resourcefinance.com or call David Putnam, President, at 866-211-0114 tive to our growth as a publishing company. Each issue of The Green Sheet consists of a vital mix of industry news, feature stories, sales advice and inspiration, new product information and company or individual profiles. In 2001 we began our occasional pieces profiling specific Industry Leaders who have made a significant impact within the payment-processing arena, and your survey responses told us that you enjoyed these features.

We asked you to rate each of these departments within our publication from 1 through 5, with 1 being "uninteresting/of no use," 3 being "moderately interesting/moderately useful" and 5 being "very interesting/very useful." We are very pleased with the report card you issued.

### Feature Stories (e.g., "This Isn't Your Grandfather's Payment Industry," issue 02:12:01)

- Very Interesting Useful ......74%

### Company Profiles (e.g., "WebTransact," issue 02:11:02)

•	Very Interesting – Useful		72	2%
		<u> </u>		

- Moderately Interesting Useful ......24%
- Uninteresting Not useful ......4%

#### New Products (e.g., "Check Imaging da Italia," issue 02:12:01)

• Very Interesting - Useful	<b>79</b> %
• Moderately Interesting - Useful	20%
11 F	1.0/

• Uninteresting – Not useful ......1%

### Industry News (e.g., "First Data Countersues Visa," issue 02:11:02)

• Very Interesting – Useful	33%
Moderately Interesting – Useful	6%

### Inspiration (e.g., "Excelling with E-mails," issue 02:11:02)

- Very Interesting Useful ......53%

Industry Leaders (e.g., "George Wallner, Hail to the Chief," issue 02:10:02)

- Very Interesting Useful ......64%

Many of our readers took the time to tell us which article published during the year stood out as their "favorite." More than 20% chose the FTC vs. CMS coverage. Many of the respondents told us that every issue was a gem.

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We are looking for a number of ways to continue to strengthen our writing. Our editorial staff – Rick Vacek, Patti Murphy, Juliette Campeau and Karen Converse – is exploring ways to expand the depth and breadth of our reporting through:

- Conducting third-party interviews for company and product profiles
- Researching emerging market opportunities
- Improved analytical techniques.

We want to encourage all of our readers to tell us what you need to know. Send us your industry-related questions, story ideas and company and product referrals to greensheet@greensheet.com. Of course, Letters to the Editor are always appreciated to paul@greensheet.com.

### **Response to Advertising**

In order to continue our mission of supporting the payment-processing sales professionals, we sell an abundance of advertising opportunities. In print and online we offer classified and display advertising to companies wanting to increase their sales through the IC channel.



Our success is a direct measure of how strongly you respond to these offers

- Responded to less than 5 ads ......47%
- Have not responded ......24%

An overwhelming majority (77%) of our readership has responded to companies advertising with us. We consistently have received one major complaint from these readers: "No one returns my call." We are working with our advertisers to ensure that they are ready to rapidly increase their enterprise.

Our media-placement specialists work with our clients to put the infrastructure in place to support the independent sales force.

### Room for Improvement

No readership survey would be complete without a response to areas in which we have done a less than stellar job. We strive for an error-free publication; our managing editor has a zero-tolerance policy for typos. All that said, we sometimes goof.

.....

We wish to extend our apology to those of you whose name appeared incorrectly or whose product information was misidentified.

Some of you have complained about the font size and paper color of our publication, and we are taking your comments under advisement.

You did respond to our brief, pithy survey much more rapidly than in years past. We will continue to enclose brief questionnaires in print and online in order to gauge your ongoing response to our efforts.

Look for new products and services in the coming months as we celebrate our 20th year. Thank you for your continued support of The Green Sheet.



We're doing another survey online. Cast your vote by April 30, 2003 for the Best Payment Processing Players – just go to www.greensheet.com.

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### **Another Look at Acquirer Rankings**

### By Patti Murphy

umbers are a bit like Silly Putty: You can make them say almost anything you want. Collecting data, on the other hand, isn't nearly so playful; it's more like extracting truths from a philandering spouse. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that the latest GSQ (Vol. 6, No. 1) – in which we attempt to size up the billion dollar acquirers market – is in need of some corrections and clarifications. Before I address the specifics, however, I'd like to make a few observations.

Payment businesses are notoriously tight-lipped when it comes to metrics. It's a philosophy I've never quite understood, because this is a tough business to get your arms around, and it would seem to me that the more forthcoming companies are about what it is they are doing (such as how and how many transactions they acquire, process and/or settle), the better the level of understanding in the market.

I often receive queries from merchants who, for example, have no idea what the name of their acquiring bank is –



or what an acquiring bank is, for that matter.

Everyone involved with a payment (from cardholders and issuers to merchants, acquirers, processors and the card brands) needs to understand whom to contact when things are going well, or not so well. But most times it's near impossible to discern where exactly a transaction may be in the authorization-and-settlement stream, to say nothing about who is responsible. That creates all kinds of problems for data collection. It also makes it tough to draw distinctions between companies that acquire, process and settle transactions.

The look of the bankcard business is growing fuzzy. In fact, the bankcard business really doesn't have much to do with banking these days. This is especially true in transaction acquiring. That's why The Green Sheet has decided to rethink its approach to preparing a yearly analysis of the acquiring market.

The 2003 acquirers report – GSQ Vol. 6, No. 4, scheduled for release in December 2003 – will incorporate data from a broader market, including data on ATM and debit cards and check authorization/guarantee services. The cooperation of companies in the acquiring market remains critical, so there is still a risk that some companies will decline to participate or will play loose with numbers. We hope the data-collection effort will create a meaningful set of metrics for comparing transaction-acquiring businesses across brands and product subsets. And this should benefit all parties.

#### **Correcting Omissions**

OK, now for the corrections and clarifications.

First, I erred, big time, when I wrote that Bank of America was no longer a member of the billion dollar acquirers' club because of the sale of its agent bank portfolio to TransFirst. Even with the sale of its agent bank portfolio, BAMerchant Services Inc., the merchant-acquiring arm of giant Bank of America, estimates it acquired \$61.4 billion in MasterCard and Visa card transactions in 2002, a slight increase over its 2001 tally of \$60.8 billion. BA Merchant Services was supporting an estimated 192,000 merchant sites at year-end 2002, down from 198,000 at the end of 2001.

Based on these numbers, Bank of America should have been listed as the eighth-largest acquirer of MasterCard and Visa credit card transactions in GSQ Vol. 6, No. 1.

Also omitted from the list was Retriever Payment Systems. This Houston-based company was once a subsidiary of First National Bank of Omaha, one of the oldest

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### **REVISED 2002 BILLION DOLLAR ACQUIRER RANKINGS – THE TOP 20**

Bank or SP Owner	Acquirer doing business as
1. J.P. Morgan Chase Co	Chase Merchant Services LLC
2. First Data Corp	First Data Merchant Services
3. National Processing, Inc	National Processing Co., LLC
4. Bank One	Paymentech
5. U.S. Bancorp	NOVA Information Systems
6. Concord EFS, Inc	Concord EFS, Inc.
7. Fifth Third Bank	
8. *Bank of America	BA Merchant Services, Inc.
	Global Payments
10. First Nat'l Bank of Omaha	First Nat'l Merch. Solutions

federally chartered banks in the country. A leverage buyout in 2001 has allowed Retriever management to grow the company in size and market reach. Today, Retriever employs a staff of 300 to support a nationwide army of sales agents.

"We're a super-ISO," explained Russ Goebel, a Retriever Vice President. FNB Omaha is its partner (and sponsor) bank, handling much of the back-end processing, but Retriever actually acquires the transactions, Goebel noted.

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Bank or SP Owner	Acquirer doing business as
11. SunTrust Banks, Inc	SunTrust Merchant Services
12. Alliance Data Systems	Alliance Data Systems
13. First Tennessee Bank	First Horizon Merchant Services
14. Heartland Payment Systems	Heartland Payment Systems
15. PNC Bank	PNC Merchant Services
16. Lynk Systems, Inc	Lynk Systems, Inc.
17. Moneris Solutions	Moneris Solutions
18. FleetBoston Financial	Fleet Business Payment Solutions
	mahaRetriever
20. TransFirst	TransFirst

\* Omitted from original list

In 2002, Retriever acquired \$7.19 billion in MasterCard and Visa transactions, up from \$6.13 billion at year-end 2001. The company also added 15,000 merchant sites to its market coverage, closing out 2002 with 87,000 merchant sites.

To revise the scorecard, then, Retriever ranks 19th in our listing of billion dollar acquirers, just behind FleetBoston Financial and ahead of TransFirst.

Someone e-mailed asking why Certegy wasn't listed. The short answer: Certegy declined. That wasn't the only transaction acquiring company to decline to participate in GSQ's data collection, but it is one of only a few that have consistently declined. Rather than guess, we opted to leave Certegy off the list, as we had in the past.

Another reader asked about Vital Processing Services. The GSQ billion dollar acquirers list has been limited to bankcard acquirers. Vital, as its name suggests, processes transactions; its customers are the acquirers. While the distinctions between bankcard acquirers and ISOs are fuzzy and getting fuzzier (and the list does include companies that are more accurately described as ISOs), it's a bit easier to distinguish processors from acquirers. As a processor, Vital will be profiled in the next GSQ (Vol. 6, No. 2, to be published in April), which is about EBT.

But the reader's question illustrates why it's important that GSQ expand coverage of the transaction acquiring market, a market that might be better served by a moniker like "merchant payment services." I hope that if and when we contact you in the months ahead and ask for input on the GSQ acquiring report, you'll take the time to help produce an honest assessment of this intensely competitive market.

Patti Murphy is Contributing Editor of The Green Sheet and President of Takoma Group. She can be reached at patti@greensheet.com

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### Are You Ready for the Fast Lane?

### **By Michelle Graff**

eems like just yesterday that all you needed to win a merchant's business and stay competitive was good sales intuition, a strong portfolio and a terminal solution that had a mag stripe reader, display and printer. Swipe a card, get an approval, print a receipt. Of course, business as usual meant high merchant turnover since the only differentiator in the minds of many merchants was price.

While selling refurbished equipment or re-programming installed terminals helps with short-term revenue, over time it simply results in shifting merchant business from one ISO/acquirer to another and doesn't move the entire industry forward.

Wow, have times changed. It's a whole new world in the payment industry. A challenge exists for ISOs to implement solutions and services that eventually will result in the wholesale replacement of aging terminals. And real opportunities exist for ISOs to differentiate their services on much more than price. It's about value, it's about speed and it's about new revenue streams. So get ready to



shift into high gear and enjoy the ride!

#### Simple Quiz: Alphabet Soup, Certs and Specs

**1.** See how many of these terms are familiar to you: PED, 3DES, EMV, Ethernet/IP, SSL, CDMA, GPRS. Do you understand their importance in the future of payments? Do you know if the associations have officially certified the solutions you're selling for PED, 3DES and EMV? Are you still stuck on CDPD for wireless, and are you aware it's a dying technology?

**2.** Do you know the terminal requirements that are necessary to support more robust solutions? Do you understand why you need a 32-bit processor, application separation, more memory, modular communication options, standard communication protocols and a powerful security architecture?

How did you do? Let's take a look at the changing payment landscape and the road ahead. It's important to understand what needs to be designed in the solutions today to keep them from running out of gas tomorrow.

### The Value of Value-add

One of the most effective means of differentiation surrounds non-payment solutions for merchants. Valueadded applications do three things for ISOs: They help attract merchants by offering new services, they improve retention by supporting more hooks into a merchant relationship and they provide new sources of revenue through the sale of additional hardware and services to support the business models. We're seeing real industry traction primarily focused in the areas of check conversion services, gift cards, loyalty and prepaid telco.

Challenges exist for implementing value-added applications on the same terminals used for payment.

• Security is important – it is imperative that the new applications not corrupt the core payment functionality of the device. Hardware and software separation protect corruption across applications. Also, true separation results in the ability to add and enhance value-added applications to a solution without re-certifying the core payment application.

• You need plenty of memory for now and the future. The last thing you want to do is limit your revenue opportunities by running out of space in a terminal.

• Fast transaction processing speeds are imperative. You simply can't effectively run payment and valueadded applications on an eight-bit processor; 32-bit

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- Check fraud is significantly reduced or eliminated
- Collection costs are virtually eliminated
- Data travels via the same EFT networks used by ATMs
- Costs are significantly less than costs associated with credit cards
- Closed accounts, bank return fees, NSF checks and check guarantee fees are history!



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processors are best suited to manage the software and device-driver demands of multiple applications.

#### IP Communication Flexibility and Speed

Bringing the speed, reliability, affordability and versatility of IP-based technologies to the point-of-sale is arguably one of the most important technological advancements to touch the payment industry. ISOs and processors who are quick to embrace IP-enabled POS terminals will gain the greatest market advantage.

The Internet has had a profound effect on the point-ofsale – it isn't about "surfing the Web" on a terminal. It's about supporting standard communication protocols and taking advantage of their flexibility and speed.

IP is the underlying technology used to move data across today's modern networks. It relies on the standard-based networking protocols (such as TCP/IP) on which the Internet was built.

TCP/IP was designed to make it easy to communicate across different networks (i.e., PSTN, LAN or WAN) using different platforms such as computers, cell phones, and cable boxes. It is now possible to connect IP-enabled payment terminals to existing IP networks, including the Internet, corporate networks, retail LANs, wireless packet networks and satellite networks.

Using a wired IP or wireless IP-enabled POS terminal to route POS data offers important benefits, including:

• **Speed** – The bandwidth available to an IP terminal using a LAN connection is typically 10 times greater than the bandwidth of a standard dial-up. Wireless CDMA and GPRS terminals use an "always on" IP data packet network to achieve average transaction times of 3-5 seconds. Faster IP-based networks are ideal for dataintensive applications like check conversion with imaging.

• **Security** – IP technology offers security not available with typical dial-up: end-to-end SSL security to enhance the encryption already used by wireless networks. And advanced security such as SSL requires a powerful 32-bit processor.

• Versatility – IP-enabled terminals that use the thinclient browser with SSL for data communication have the speed and bandwidth to support a variety of valueadded applications at the POS.



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The last thing you need to do is throw money out the window. Make sure you partner with a provider that can get you over the bumps in the road and provide a smooth and smart migration to the future. Get ready to shift your business into high gear.

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### Standards and Certifications Matter

The addition of value-added applications and the connectivity to open data networks translates to a heightened need for security in terminals. In order to reduce your exposure to fraud or corruption, it's important to make sure that the solutions you deploy meet the latest industry standards.

• **3DES**: Triple DES ("3DES") is the new encryption standard being adopted by the card payment industry as a proactive measure against potential attacks to "crack" standard DES keys. A more secure encryption method is necessary to stay one step ahead of the bad guys.

• **PED**: Visa has published standards for PIN-entry devices (PED). It is important to deploy solutions that are PED compliant. The specifications define requirements to protect the inner workings of terminals from fraud by ensuring important PIN physical and logical



security characteristics. These features are important in protecting financial data and payment applications. The specifications along with a listing of PED-certified terminals can be found at www.visa.com/pin.

• EMV: As we all know, smart cards are far from being in most consumers' wallets. However, chip cards offer increased security. Fraud can be dramatically reduced because chip cards are much more difficult to counterfeit than magnetic stripe cards. In addition, the chip itself can be used to store information that positively identifies the cardholder and presents a major obstacle for would-be thieves. Visa has estimated that counterfeiting can be decreased by at least 70% with a switch to smart cards.

EMV is the global industry standard that has been established for smart card credit and debit transactions. EMV establishes a single approval process for payment terminals and smart cards to ensure cross-payment system interoperability through compliance with the latest specifications.

Interoperability is achieved by granting two levels of "EMV Type Approval:"

- Level 1 Applies to the mechanical, electrical and logical interfaces between chip cards and payment devices.
- Level 2 Governs all application software.

A list of Level 1 and Level 2 approved devices can be found at www.emvco.com.

### Around the Bend

Since you can't predict what's around the bend on the payment road to the future, make sure you're ready with solutions that are designed to give you the freedom to upgrade on your schedule with modules and applications that will help you easily shift from PIN-based debit to solutions like gift card, chip-based loyalty programs or fully automated check imaging using IP communications.

The last thing you need to do is throw money out the window. Make sure you partner with a provider that can get you over the bumps in the road and provide a smooth and smart migration to the future. Get ready to shift your business into high gear.

Michelle Graff is Director of Global Marketing for VeriFone.

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n this third and final part of this article, I will further examine the value propositions offered to merchants today and offer my views of the effective value propositions for the future.



I believe the equipment-leasing model of financing organic portfolio growth is going to slowly

whither away over the next three to seven years. Last year, First Data collected \$275 million of up-front equipment monies from merchants, and much of this was used to finance its 4,800 "feet on the street" (see Part II). Assuming a 500% mark-up for each credit card lease generated by the FDC sales employees, ISOs and ICs, that means about \$47,700 of leasing and sales profits was generated on average for each FDC representative last year.

The bulk of this money presumably went to the ISOs and their representatives. These same figures also might apply to the majority of the ISOs of NPC, Global, Concord, NOVA and the other large ISO-based acquirers. The proceeds of leasing revenues have fueled the organic



growth of most ISO acquirers over the last 15 years. But that growth is slowing significantly, and the stock market value of the ISO-growth companies has suffered dramatically.

According to First Data Chairman and CEO Charles Fote, FDC's organic growth was 6% last

year, and many of the other large ISO-based acquirers are showing growth of single digits for the first time. This is in spite of 5.1% same-store sales growth as the secular movement of payments to electronic methods continues to displace check and cash payments.

Visa acquiring grew 5.5% in 2002. To think that 4,800 people are working with a net result of growth at about the same rate as the secular rate is fairly astounding. These 4,800 "feet on the street" are merely replacing the attrition of the FDC portfolios. The same result is plaguing other public-sector companies across the board. At least FDC and Concord and Global are not showing the negative "growth" of NPC for 2002.

The leasing model of financing portfolio growth has lasted a lot longer than it should have, in my opinion. It has become less and less effective and is doomed to failure as a long-term strategy. There are stronger value propositions developing to grow a merchant acquiring business. These value propositions are (1) a return to the value offered by banking services and (2) the new proposition of multiple and value-added products with bankcard acquiring one of the primary (but not the only) products.

For the sake of this article, let's look at our industry as if it were three segments – transaction processing, banking and acquiring. These are actually three different businesses within our industry with different value propositions and different financial models. The hard part is that these different models and propositions are confused in the minds of many industry observers with resulting comments and conclusions that don't make a lot of sense.

When smart people claim "this is a scale-driven business" or "this is a commodity business," they are probably referring to the transaction-processing segment of our business. As described in previous articles of this series, there is only one pure "transaction processor," and that is Vital.

The players most think of as "transaction processors" derive the bulk of their profits from acquiring. Like most ISO shops from big to small, they like to call themselves "processors." These true "transaction processors" make most of their money by acquiring, not by processing

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transactions at a cost of 1.5 to 2.5 cents and reselling that service for 2.5 to 12 cents to others.

Yes, pure transaction processing is a scale business and arguably can be described as a commodity. However, those conclusions are not rel-

evant to the struggle to capture market share in the real "acquiring business" currently controlled by the four publicly traded non-banks and the remaining large banks on the acquiring scene.

### **Banks – The Former and Future Winners**

Let's next discuss the banking component of our business. It is true that banks were the only acquirers in the beginning and that they exited the business almost completely in the late 1980s and early '90s. It is also true that a few large banks have re-entered the business in a big way and that others are considering doing the same.

It is axiomatic that if a merchant has a full-service banking relationship, then that bank has first dibs on the merchant processing business as part of that full-service relationship. Banks should be in the acquiring business and inherently have the most to gain from the acquiring rela-



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tionship. They also should have the most compelling value proposition for a merchant. Why?

First, banks have the ability to provide next day funding.

Second, banks have the financial history and operating performance of their customer as well as the authority over the merchant's business in real time to analyze, track and mitigate risk.

Third, banks know the bank balances, the incoming funds, the NSF history and the liabilities of their business customers.

Fourth, banks receive the funding directly from all of the credit card sources, including American Express, Discover, Diners and JCB, as well as the bankcard acquirer.

By definition, the full-service bank (if the merchant has one) is the trusted provider of financial services. As indicated earlier in this series of articles, the average merchant location (excluding the top 230 merchants) processes about \$110,000 of bankcard volume per year and pays \$55 above interchange to its acquirer. If the merchant's full-service bank could meet the card-acceptance needs of the merchant in a competitive manner, the merchant should be able to get the most overall value in a single relationship from the local bank.

This is irrespective of whether the merchant has a lending relationship with the local bank. But if there is a loan involved, the addition of the acquiring relationship is a given. A bank often requires the bankcard acquiring relationship as a condition of lending the business money. Although this practice is arguably counter to the antitying provisions of the antitrust laws that govern all banks, I have seen no challenges to this "tying" practice, which is common throughout America.

In other words, if the local bank has loaned the merchant money and offers bankcard processing, there isn't a much stronger "value proposition" and this merchant's business is going to remain with the local bank until the loan is fully paid and the merchant's perceived need for future loans is satisfied.

In addition to loans, bankers have the ability to offer lots of other services attractive to businesses that no ISOs or sales representatives of ISOs and non-bank acquirers can offer. These services include accepting check, cash and coin deposits, offering auto loans and mortgages, issuing credit and debit cards, providing trust services and all of the other services commonly offered by banks large and small throughout the country.

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Banks are in a unique position to benefit from participating in the acquiring business in a serious way. The local bank knows which competing acquirers are doing business with its customers because it can review the incoming ACH files each morning and see what

monies are arriving from First Data, NPC, NOVA, Concord, Global and the rest of its competitors and in what amounts. Can you imagine having better

information than this to prospect for additional merchant accounts?

Banks also have a gold mine of leads with each of their commercial customers. Telemarketing works best in our industry when a bank employee or representative is calling the bank's very own customers to sell merchant accounts. Commercial bank customers normally will give an audience to the bank for their merchant business as a courtesy to their important business partner.

My point is that a bank is in the best position to offer a merchant value-added card processing. Attrition rates are lower for bank portfolios and margins are higher. Why? Merchants would rather pay a little bit (or even a lot) more to a trusted partner, especially when they rely heav-



The bank that offers a strong merchant acquiring program in its local community is going to control the merchant acquiring business for its commercial customers - no contest. While the banking industry previously has been unable to find ways to provide that strong merchant acquiring program, new technology that will integrate core bank functions with new payment and related transaction products will change the acquiring landscape long before the end of this decade. The sea change of merchant acquiring back to the banks is what can be seen out on the horizon. It is coming.

### **Discarding a Failed Model**

Fortunately for ISOs, there are relatively few banks that offer quality merchant programs today. The integration that I speak of does not exist today. The good news is that there is still time to kick the (formerly) easy habit of building high-attrition merchant portfolios on the back of equipment leasing and hidden-fee revenues.

Today's typical ISO "deal" is to snag a new merchant with the following "value proposition:"



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• Offer a low-ball (even below cost) rate for qualified transactions without disclosing the rate for nonqualified transactions and other fees.

• Offer this rate with no rate guarantee period without telling the

antee period without telling the merchant it is a "teaser rate" over which the ISO and/or sales representative

probably has no control whatever.

• Convince the merchant that the equipment he owns must be replaced with a new piece of equipment (or software package) with the construct that the rate quoted will save more than the monthly payment.

That's pretty much the ballgame played out with different variations for many ISOs for the last 15 years. A merchant who bites on this "value proposition" will be stuck with an equipment lease payment for four to five years but with a rate that probably will be increased within the first year and falsely blamed on one or more of the many Visa or MasterCard interchange increases.

Of course, the low-ball qualified rate isn't really low because the non-qualified transactions, which usually include check cards, often are priced at 100 or 150 or more basis points over the true interchange variance. The poor merchant who was told in writing that the rate was 1.29% or 1.49%, for example, does not realize the charge is going to be as much as 3.79% when a good customer presents a corporate card or frequent flyer card or signature debit card. Then, when the next Visa and/or MasterCard increase comes along with a rate increase the next April or October, the merchant's 1.29% or 1.49% rate will be increased back to what it was before or to an even higher level.

The result for the merchant: paying for an unneeded piece of equipment for the remainder of the five-year term and being stuck with incredibly high costs for non-qualified cards unless the merchant can go back to a previous processor at a previous rate.

For 15 years, this model or an offshoot of this model has been the primary driver of business from one ISO or another. Some of the large ISO-driven acquirers have stuck their heads in the sand offloading responsibility for mistreating merchants to those pesky "independent contractors" that, after all, aren't their employees.

While their heads are in the sand, the merchants get together and file class-action lawsuits, their ISOs are taken over by the FTC, sold portfolios are pirated by the very people who put millions of dollars into their pockets



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and the Wall Street analysts can't figure out why the industry is missing earnings calls.

The chickens have come home to roost for many failing ISO-driven acquirers in our industry. The money has been in the equipment leas-

ing and hidden-fee game, and millions of merchants are sick of it. Merchants are sick of receiving monthly statements designed to obfuscate the true cost of card acceptance.

Merchants are looking for trusted parties with whom to do business. Banks are going to become the alternative of choice unless ISOs morph into respectable businesses offering fully disclosed pricing and treating their customers like adults – both at the time of signing as well as throughout the lifetime of the relationship.

In summary, the billions of dollars of fees collected from merchants have not funded the organic growth of nonbank merchant portfolios for the last 15 years or so. Of the \$22.65 billion of acquiring fees collected from merchants in 2002, about 1%, or \$200 million, went into the pockets of sales employees and ICs.

This is not enough money to pay for the cost of signing

and properly servicing merchants. The money to do that has come from equipment leasing secured with false promises of cost savings on card-acceptance fees.

ISOs and banks that offer advanced value-added services and multiple products are slowly taking back the acquiring industry. The cost of offering these services and providing ongoing support to the merchant users will be borne by the merchants willing to voluntarily pay for the improved value proposition to trusted partners.

In the next article, we will discuss the economics of offline debit vs. online debit for the different merchant sectors.

Bob Carr is the Founder, CEO and Chairman of Heartland Payment Systems, the nation's largest privately owned merchant acquirer and ninth largest overall, with annual revenues exceeding \$300,000,000. Heartland was recognized by INC Magazine as the 57th fastest-growing private company in America and is one of the 10 largest INC 500 companies. Bob was a Founder and Vice President from 1988 to '90 of the Bankcard Services Association, which has since become the ETA.

To learn more about Heartland, visit www.hpsteammates.com or www.heartlandpaymentsystems.com, or e-mail Bob at Bob.Carr@e-hps.com.



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# NEAA Provides Flurry of Opportunity ... and Fun

**By Steve Eazell** 

s I approached Mount Snow, Vt., site of the Northeast Acquirers Association (NEAA) Winter Meeting and Seminar the last five years, I was not surprised that it was snowing – same as last year. After all, I was high in the mountains of Vermont, deep in the heart of New England, at a place that is picturesque, breathtaking, peaceful, quaint, remote and it is Mount Snow.

Why would a handful of bankers, acquirers, ISOs/MSPs and vendors come together in such a place to hold a miniature trade show? The Grand Summit Hotel and Conference Center is not your normal business setting. It is a winter retreat, a full-service ski resort located high above the hustle and bustle of the trappings of everyday tedium.

This winter wonderland seems more like a place one goes to get away from it all, not a place for educational seminars and exhibition booths touting the benefits of credit card processing, check guarantee, gift cards and the like, but that is exactly what this meeting is designed to do – mix some serious business with pleasure. After a gruel-



ing, action-packed day filled with education, meetings, networking and vendor schmoozing, the conference schedules the following day for time to enjoy this impressive facility, with the day set aside for skiing, snowmobiling and a host of other winter diversions.

This year's show took place February 5-6. The show starts on Wednesday, although for the early birds who arrive as early as Tuesday afternoon there are informal activities, such as innertubing, for families or whoever wants to join. Of course, there also are the unplanned activities taking place at the lobby bar – i.e., networking, etc.

The show begins with a couple of hours with the vendors in the exhibition hall. What made it so refreshing was the fact that the show consists of only table-top displays of equal size and no one is allowed more than one space, therefore, putting all at an equal footing within the room. I also found the traffic to be quite brisk as the time wound down to lunch. The seminars began after lunch, and the hall closed down to give the vendors (I was one of the exhibitors) time to enjoy the program.

The show usually focuses on one topic; this year it was fraud – how pertinent. The slate of speakers ranged from representatives from MasterCard and Visa to a representative of the U.S. Postal Service and a consultant and a private company. I found Ruth Mendonca, a U.S. Postal Inspector, to be incredibly informative about identity fraud and the risk associated with the mail. I felt as if all of the speakers know their topics well and are quite capable of delivering interesting and informative data on each. Overall, the seminars were well done.

After the seminars, there was a cocktail party and more time with us exhibitors. Again, the floor was quite active, and I got a chance to chat with many of the attendees of this year's show. We then retired to the dining room for dinner and more networking. All in all, a very full day.

The next day began with a breakfast buffet sponsored by the NEAA, with the day's winter festivities scheduled to follow. I chose the snowmobiling since I had never had the pleasure of experiencing this incredible e-ticket ride. The conference also offered skiing as well as innertubing in what were perfect snow conditions. All of the activities, I am told, were spectacular. It was a nice finish to a superb event.

This show has grown exponentially over the last few years, and I can see why. But its lovely location may not be the only reason it and others like it have been increasing in popularity. (For example, the Southeast Acquirers Association had a packed house for its second meeting, last summer in St. Augustine, Fla.

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This is purely a regional phenomenon that rapidly is becoming a more accessible vehicle for the acquiring world to get together and spend a little quality time together. With the growth of the ETA into a full-fledged association with a behemoth of a trade show, there need to be other opportunities for the local feet on the street, the small community bank and the underfunded sales office, and this isn't a half-bad way to network and disseminate information.

According to NEAA President Alan Forgione of Card Systems, Inc., the organization actually has been around since it was formed in 1985 by a handful of bankcard professionals to network and share ideas. That actually predates the ETA. This loyal, regional bunch has been meeting at places just like this (there also is a summer version for those of you that would prefer a milder clime).

"The Northeast Acquirers Association was founded with one primary objective: to serve as an educational forum for financial institutions and ISO/MSPs in the acquiring industry," Forgione said. "We receive and communicate information on the latest technology, hottest topics in the payment industry, and new changes to rules and regulations from the various card associations. NEAAis focused on providing this forum in the most economical way so all can take part in the educational and networking opportunities between vendors and acquirers, as well as acquirers to acquirers."

As I was driving down the hill back to civilization, I reflected on a couple of productive days. The flavor of this event captures the heart of this business. I met a bunch of great people that I may never have gotten the chance to meet, plus I got to see some of the people who make my business successful. I also got to do something this Californian does not regularly get to do: ride a snowmobile 60 miles per hour on a frozen lake in one of the most beautiful parts of the country.

Rest assured, as a great American once said, "I shall return!"

Steve Eazell is the Director of National Sales and Marketing for Secure Payment Systems, Inc., one of the nation's leading providers of checks and gift card services, including check conversion and guarantee.

Steve has been part of the merchant acquiring industry for more than 15 years, working for some of the most successful companies in the business. He lives in California with his wife, Diana, and 11year-old daughter, Trista.





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# Bank One Takes Things In-House, Evicts First Data

s part of an effort to consolidate operations, Bank One Corp. announced that it will move its credit card processing h business in-house, ending its contract with First Data Corp. First Data will continue to process for Bank One until the current contract expires in June 2004.

Bank One also announced that during the completion of the transition to its own in-house system, which might take at least three years, TSYS will process the business formerly handled by First Data. This partnership is expected to last until at least 2006.

Pricing issues and Bank One's overall shift toward bringing its outsourced business under one roof seem to be the reasons behind the decision.

Bank One has been the largest single customer of First Data's card processing subsidiary for four years. Bank One has 50 million cardholders; First Data has 325 million card accounts on file with 1,400 card-issuing clients worldwide. TSYS processes 245 million accounts. First Data's Chairman and CEO, Charlie Fote, expressed disappointment in Bank One's decision but said his company's obligations are to staff and

stockholders. He said his company could not meet Bank One's terms and that it would not sign up unprofitable business.

"We have an obligation to our investors and employees ... to ensure that our client relationships are compensatory to First Data," he said in a statement.

Fote stressed that Bank One's decision was not based on First Data's technological capabilities: "We highly value our client relationships and have built an unparalleled portfolio of services to serve them well." First Data will work with Bank One over the next 15 months to ensure a smooth transition, he said.

Bank One and First Data will remain partners in Paymentech, with Bank One holding 52.5% and First Data holding 47.5%. Paymentech is the nation's second-largest merchant acquirer, based on transactions.

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# **Concord EFS Stock Drops Amid Sale Rumors, Changes**

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March 10, 2003 Bloomberg news story reported that Concord EFS, Inc. wants to sell itself for up to \$6 billion and has hired Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. to find a buyer. In addition, Concord made major changes to its management team in February, including the announcement that Edward A. Labry III, Director and President, would not replace Dan Palmer as CEO in May as expected. Concord's stock plummeted as a result of the announcements.

Bloomberg listed as potential buyers some of Concord's competitors: First Data Corp., Automatic Data Processing, Electronic Data Services, Total System Services and Visa International. However, Visa has denied any interest in buying the company. Concord refused to comment on the sale rumors, citing the report as "speculation."

Shares of Concord lost nearly 23% of their value on the New York Stock Exchange immediately following the management changes.

And after the Bloomberg news story hit the wires, shares of Concord fell more than 19%, bringing the stock price to a three-year low. So far in 2003, Concord's stock has fallen about 47%; in the last year, it is down nearly 70%.

Analysts and investors are concerned that Concord is having trouble renewing the contracts of major customers for its STAR debit card program, many of which will expire at the end of 2003. The network is losing market share to other com-

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petitors, such as Visa, MasterCard and First Data Corp.

Following are some of the management changes made by Concord's Board of Directors: Richard P. Kiphart, head of the Corporate Finance Department at William Blair & Co., was appointed Chairman of the Board; Dan M. Palmer, Concord Chairman and CEO since 1991, will serve as Director and Co-CEO; Bond Isaacson, Executive Vice R. President, was named Director and Co-CEO; and Edward A. Labry III will continue to serve in his current roles.

In a conference call for its investors, Palmer said the Board wanted Labry to remain in his current position in order to focus on growing the company's revenue.

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# Stambler's Scrambler Tech Patent Suit Nets Him \$0

174

s an electronics engineer, Leon Stambler spent a good portion of his life devising technology for identification verification and methods for encryption of information. Over the years, he has filed patents for what he has invented. He also has filed – and settled – lawsuits for patent infringement against some pretty large corporations, waging a kind of David-vs.-Goliath battle for the Information Age.

Two years ago, Stambler, 74 and a Florida resident, sued VeriSign, Inc. and RSA Security, Inc. for more than \$20 million in damages in federal district court in Wilmington, Del. His suit alleged that the two companies incorporated his technology, without permission or compensation, into their systems for secure Internet transaction authentication.

This month, the jury on the case let VeriSign and RSA off the hook and decided that Stambler's patents had not been infringed.

Once the suit finally came to trial, it lasted two weeks. The jury reached its decision in three hours, based on argument that there was no patent infringement because Stambler's patents don't cover Internet transactions or message scrambling. Attorneys for VeriSign and RSA asserted that Stambler's technology uses different techniques and functions than the Secure Socket Layer (SSL) security standard used to scramble communications between Web sites and their customers. The SSL protocol was developed in 1994 and patented in 1997 by Netscape, now a part of AOL Time Warner.

Stambler was granted seven patents between 1993 and 1999; the last one, U.S. patent number 5,974,148, is for a "method for security information relevant to a transaction," which he and his attorney say includes SSL technology. Stambler testified he developed his technology in the early 1990s as a way to verify the identities of people involved in transactions after his son was prevented from cashing a check at a bank with only one form of ID.

Stambler has settled past claims with other companies, including First Data Corp., wireless software provider Openwave Systems, Inc. and wireless encryption software developer Certicom Corp. In the 1980s, Stambler's suit against NCR for ATM PIN technology netted him a \$2.6 million licensing fee; he also unsuccessfully sued Diebold, Inc., which makes and services ATMs, for the same infringement issue.

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# Good Things Come to Those Who Don't Have to Wait

SI, the New Jersey Headquarters takes the concept of "same day approvals" for merchant accounts to the next level. As part of its new program, called 1-800-BankCard, the company said ISOs can fax their merchant applications to MSI NJ and submit them online through MSI's Web site. In the past, to be eligible for "same day approval" an ISO had to send the original merchant application to MSI NJ for next day delivery.

Mario Parisi, Chief Operations Officer for MSI NJ, is thrilled with the new program and thinks ISOs will be, too. "This is a program designed to do everything you possibly want," he said. "Basically, you get paid in 24 hours. If you're a sales rep and you're out in the field, you get to fax in an application ... we have instant approvals. No pictures are needed, no original application is needed."

In addition to online and faxed applications, the 1-800-BankCard program offers ISOs the option to fax leasing contracts, with no originals needed. It also provides 24hour lease funding via an automated clearinghouse (ACH). MSI NJ said it is able to offer direct leasing with no declines because of its strong relationship with a reputable leasing company, Lease Finance Group, a division of CIT.

"As a sales rep for us, we give you

direct leasing. We give you the relationship with the leasing company, and we don't touch your lease money. You get to fax in the lease, you get to get your commission instantaneously," said Parisi.

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1-800-BankCard allows ISOs to check the status of their accounts online through MSI NJ's Web site, www.1800bankcard.com. The information available to ISOs and merchants includes current and historical data from statements, batches and chargebacks. "Our site is very interactive and easy to use," said Parisi. "[ISOs] can go on there and tell when things are shipped and when things are approved."

MSI NJ also deploys equipment inhouse and then ships the equipment via UPS ground; both services are free of charge. If equipment is under warranty and a defect arises during the first 30 days, it is replaced immediately, no questions asked and at no cost to the merchant or ISO. "We do believe in quality control," he said. "We make sure everything goes right the first time so there's no technical support problems."

The 1-800-BankCard program is the latest offering from a company in its 14th year of business, which has grown along with the industry. Mario Parisi and his two partners, George Mayo and Andrew Czujko founded MSI NJ in 1989. The partners set out to establish their company as a leading provider of electron-

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"It is so hard to define what level ISOs are at. It's so hard to get the truth about their merchant numbers. Here at MSI NJ, we do not give anyone any type of false promises. We don't say yes to everyone. If they are credit worthy, we are willing to participate."

> – Mario Parisi CEO, MSI NJ

ic payment processing services. Its initial steps were taken in leasing equipment, which evolved to residual streams and eventually led to "ISO in a box," as Mario put it – front- and back-end relationship and processing.

In 1993, MSI New Jersey formed a buying cooperative with two other entities, Merchant Services of Long Island and Merchant Services of South Dakota, although each entity remains independently owned and operated as well as financially autonomous.

Today, MSI NJ provides merchants with quality credit/debit card processing for Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover and other private-label card transactions in addition to offering check truncation, conversion and guarantee, gift card/loyalty card programs and an Internet payment gateway (the company also does its own risk and credit underwriting). All programs are



accomplished through sales channels on a national basis. Direct sales channels, major accounts, independent ISOs – they all are part of the mix.

According to Parisi, hundreds of merchants can be approved automatically, regardless of credit, brick-andmortar retailers such as hair salons, bicycle shops, etc. MSI NJ has no specific target market, although the company does not approve of all merchants. On its Web site, MSI NJ lists the types of businesses it typically does not do business with, such as 900 numbers, although there are some exceptions, and businesses operating under certain criteria will be allowed.

"Our target is whatever our sales force wants," Parisi said. "We're not afraid of high-volume accounts if the criteria is there."

The criterion that Parisi refers to is the volume of deals within a profit-sharing structure. MSI NJ has no set guidelines within that structure. Each ISO partnership is coordinated on an individual basis.

"It is so hard to define what level ISOs are at," Parisi said. "It's so hard to get the truth about their merchant numbers. Here at MSI NJ, we do not give anyone any type of false promises. We don't say yes to everyone. If they are credit worthy, we are willing to participate."

An even more appealing offer for ISOs is the signing bonus. When an ISO signs up a merchant to accept American Express, Discover and Diner's Club, MSI NJ will pay that ISO an upfront commission of \$35, \$20 and \$15, respectively. MSI NJ adds in a free merchant welcome kit with conventional stickers, a user's guide, overlays and plates. And don't forget the highly competitive wholesale equipment rates because of MSI NJ's directbuy relationships with providers such as Hypercom, Lipman, Thales and VeriFone.

"ISOs like our longevity, our stability and the way we pay," said Parisi. MSI NJ promises monthly residual checks for life, paid like clockwork on the 25th day of the following month to all partnering ISOs. Those checks can be paid in conjunction with portfolio ownerships that contain aggressive buy rates and multiple revenue streams. MSI NJ offers buyouts to ISOs who prefer money up front rather than residuals. Custom, comprehensive programs are available to every ISO who partners with

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MSI NJ with no app or set-up fees.

"Our primary market is ISOs," Parisi said. "Our main goal is that we want them to know that we are honest, reputable – a good company to do business with. We give you more opportunity. You'll make the most possible money available, and not only can you make the most money, but you're going to get paid it. There is something to be said for companies who don't break promises. We wake up every morning and do the right thing."

Parisi said MSI NJ focuses on finding the good ISOs and getting rid of the bad ones – the ones guilty of profiling, poor credit, no credit or credibility. "We do our due diligence," he said. "In the real world, everyone represents but can't say yes to everything. We're in the real world."

In that real world, support is vital to MSI NJ as well. Consider the three

departments that make up its support services: The ISO support desk is open from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time; the customer service desk has a live, real-time 800 number because MSI NJ insists that merchants always have a live contact; and the technical support desk, also a live 800 number, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Several years ago, MSI NJ implemented a proactive support program as opposed to a reactive help desk. It was simple – every terminal gets tested in-house before it goes out the door.

Parisi reports that it has eliminated 20% to 30% of equipment problems. "Here at MSI, we basically do it right the first time so we're not chasing our tails all day," he said.

The program also involves quality control, dotting the i's and crossing the t's. Person A inputs data. Person B double-checks it. MSI runs daily reports in-house as yet another backup to insure high ROI as well as a 95% effective support rate.

"We just have a well-oiled machine here," said Parisi.

MSI NJ continues to grow; about 19,000 merchants use MSI NJ's services, up from about 15,000 two and a half years ago. The company reports it processed \$1.48 billion in 2002, and its revenue has doubled since 2000, to \$12 million. Hypercom Corp. named MSI NJ "ISO of the Year" for 2002.

"MSI's philosophy is to maintain the communication between the merchant and their sales channels," Parisi said. "This communication maintains positive customer relations along with client loyalty. It's better for the merchant and the rep."

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## Global eTelecom, Inc.

ISO contact:

Chris Brundage, VP, Sales/Marketing Phone: 877-454-3835, ext. 222 E-mail: cbrundage@globaletelecom.com

### **Company address:**

35008 Emerald Coast Parkway, 4th floor Destin, FL 32541 Phone: 850-650-8506 Fax: 850-837-8066 Web site: www.globaletelecom.com

### **ISO benefits:**

- Newly developed proprietary engine provides full check conversion solution.
- Offering check conversion in a guarantee program gives ISOs an edge when dealing with merchants who are reluctant to accept paper.
- Accounts Receivable Conversion gives both large and small merchants an electronic lockbox solution.
- Recently signed a license agreement under a patent with LML to provide uninterrupted service to all of its clients, customers and partners.

# **Traveling the Conversion Globe**

ny voyage, no matter how short or long, requires a strong, sturdy and reliable vehicle. For Global eTelecom, Inc., 2002 was a journey filled with challenges ... and successes. The vehicle it relies on to meet those challenges is its newly developed proprietary engine.

Providing electronic check processing services to ISOs, financial institutions, processors, utility companies, insurance companies and retail merchants, Global eTelecom considers itself a national leader in electronic check conversion and is solidifying that position with its new technology.

"Because of our engine, we have been able to provide a full turnkey check conversion solution for our ISOs as well as a solution for our business partners," says Ron Williams, President of Global eTelecom. "A person can come in with needs from A to Z and we can meet them. They can turn and say to us they need to use this part or that part to manage their business. They can come in and say they want to do their own stuff and just want to use a part of us to do it.

"Our partners can manage and choose from any of our services. Instead of being like our competitors who offer a straight check conversion program, we offer what customers want, and they can privatelabel these services as well. Our partners' customers don't want to deal with third parties, they just want it done."

Providing ISOs with total solutions is a cornerstone of Global eTelecom. By offering check conversion in a guarantee program, Global eTelecom gives ISOs an edge when dealing with merchants who are reluctant to accept paper.

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"Customers want to write checks while merchants don't want to accept them," says Williams. "We turn the check into a transaction just like a credit card at no additional cost to the merchant. They are already paying for Visa and MasterCard processing, and if they can take checks and get funding within 48 hours, everyone is happy. It gives the check writer what they want. After all, check writing is still the number one payment method in the industry. Because of that, check conversion is the biggest demand in the ISO community."

Developing and implementing a proprietary engine may have been a big part of Global's success this past year, but change in its management fueled that engine. Three new names were put on the masthead in the last Williams vear. (formerly of EZCheck), Vice President of Finance Clark (formerly Justin of PricewaterhouseCoopers) and Chief Financial Officer Douglas T. Ingram Jr. (formerly of Wilson, Price, Barranco. Billingsley and Blankenship of Montgomery, Ala.) all have had pivotal roles in steering Global eTelecom along its journey. Why bring in new blood? Was the

old management losing steam?

"It wasn't so much as what the old management was or wasn't doing, it was more about needing people with expertise in finance to protect Global's back end and handle all the business coming in," says Williams. "We've increased our business tenfold. As for me, I was their biggest competitor. I had a lot of background in the ISO and banking industry, over 17 years. I wanted to go to the next level. Global eTelecom wanted to go to the next level."

Still sitting in the captain's chair, though, is John Beebe, Chairman of the Board and CEO of Global eTelecom. The new team appears to be working well. "I work daily with John," says Williams. "We all work very well together. Now John has more time to develop other industry ideas."

One of those ideas has already come to fruition at Global. Called the ARC Program (for Accounts Receivable Conversion), it is also known as an electronic lockbox solution. A pilot program in conjunction with NACHA, it offers ACH solutions for merchants who receive checks in the mail.

Instead of making deposits the old way – namely, filling



out deposit slips and walking to the bank – merchants can do it through ACH. The ARC program images the check and sends the file to Global eTelecom, which processes it through ACH.

Global is offering this new service to merchants large and small. Global believes its ARC program focuses on a new marketplace with huge revenue potential. "We already have a list of people waiting in line for this," says Williams. "With ARC, ISOs now can talk to insurance companies, property management companies, utility companies – anyone who gets checks in the mail. Banks control that market.

"Now the ISOs have the option to go in and provide total check solutions, move money faster for merchants, offer faster reporting and make money. We're helping them add to their customer base. But we are taking one step at a time with the program. We don't believe in going too fast."

According to Williams, overall reaction from the industry to the new feel of Global has been very positive with increased sales. "Because of our new products and new management, we have been overwhelmed with all the business coming our way," Williams says. "It's all about service. From the ISOs to the merchants to our partners, we sell, provide and deliver service. We don't just talk about it."

One of Global eTelecom's newest business partners is ABANCO International, LLC, an MSP based in Rosemont, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. Since the late spring of 2002, this single-source solution platform provider has been associated with Global, and it's working well.

"We were going to build an engine ourselves but realized you don't need to reinvent the wheel when you already have a competent player," says Anthony Ashe, Senior Vice President of Marketing for ABANCO. "Global is very much on top of their game in terms of communication and customizing the many objectives we all have. They're also good guys to work with. We're very impressed with John and Ron."

For this partnership, Global eTelecom provides the entire back-office conversion engine to ABANCO. The alliance provides for a shared technology and shared risk under ABANCO's private label. The result is a cost-effective solution for ABANCO's customers.

"We feel we now deliver the finest generic product and buy rate out there," says Ashe. "We also will drill down and customize for certain segments of the ISO and merchant community. We anticipate 3,000 to 4,000 merchants a month in our build-out – 35-40% of those are likely to

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utilize electronic check conversion merchants as well.

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Global eTelecom's ultimate goals? First, company officials want to finish their current pilot programs, scheduled to be completed by March 2003.

"In the past few months we have had equipment companies contact us because they have found out they need to be in check conversion territory," says Williams. "This has been a big issue. As more companies come on board, our goal is to be able to continue providing check conversion service and being better than anyone else in service. Our engine makes sure it all runs stronger and better than anyone else."

To keep that engine running strong, Global recently signed a license agreement under a U.S. patent with LML Payment Systems to provide uninterrupted service to all of its clients, customers and partners. Anyone using Global's engine, no matter what portion, is covered under the agreement.

"LML sent out a letter to the industry stating they have been issued the patent on check conversion," says Williams. "The letter said providers needed to sign a license agreement with LML or have service interrupted. According to their patent, they can take legal action.

"We wouldn't have signed a license agreement with LML if we didn't want to protect ourselves. We chose to do this. We have too much of a reputation and too much of a commitment to our customers. We didn't want to take a chance on what could happen or what could be pursued."

Williams predicts the future of check conversion is in providing a total solutions package that includes conversion with guarantee.

"The only way it will work at the point-of-sale is if there is a guarantee whereby the merchant never sees a return fee," says Williams. "The future of the industry is absolutely conversion. Even credit card terminals are showing it. Check conversion has come a long way this past year, but if you're selling at the point-of-sale, check conversion with guarantee is the only way to sell it.

"You've got to be able to show your merchants they need to give what the check writer wants. They need to give them the choice of taking their checks. And they need to choose a company that will provide the total solution, with all options."



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### Lipman USA

### ISO contact:

Michael Grossman, Vice President, Sales Phone: 516-484-2021 E-mail: mgrossman@lipmanusa.com

### **Company address:**

50 Gordon Drive Syosset, NY 11791 Phone: 800-4-Lipman Fax: 516-484-9057 Web site: www.lipmanusa.com

### **ISO benefits:**

- Extensive commitment to ISOs, reflected in benefits that include a simple buy rate, customized terminals, same-day shipment and low cost of ownership, which means ISOs don't have to spend much time servicing Lipman terminals.
- Terminals are easy for merchants to use.
- Has appeal to small ISOs as well as large ones.
- NURIT VIP (Value Incentive Program) offers extra rewards.
- Provides interactive training tool.
- Added value protocols.
- Reliable equipment.
- Price integrity through distributors.

# A Manufacturer's American Dream

hat do a leading car rental company and a leading terminal manufacturer have in common? Both try harder. However, one clearly has impacted the payment-processing industry more than the other. "We came up with an idea to bring a lower-cost, smaller-footand higher-performance print device to market. This was the turning point for Lipman," says Mony Zenou, President/CEO of Lipman USA.

That turning point came in the early '90s, but it wasn't easy to get there. "It didn't take off immediately," Zenou says. "There were three or four years of very difficult work. We made errors and learned lessons the hard way."

As a wholly owned subsidiary of Lipman Electronic Engineering, Ltd. (listed on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange under the symbol LPMA), Lipman USAevolved from an Israeli electronic engineering and communications company into a separate entity focused on the POS market.

Its evolution began in the late '80s with a project from Discount Bank of Israel to create a POS-like device for tellers to use to record banking transactions. The original product was a consolidation of a cash register and POS terminal. It was a success, and Lipman Electronic Engineering then made the decision to bring this technology to American shores. That first device was the NURIT 2050, and Lipman USA was established.

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For the next few years, Lipman USA struggled to find its niche while competing with established manufacturers. Then, in 1996, Lipman introduced the NURIT 2070. Although it was large compared to today's standards, it still was half the size of what other manufacturers were offering. It had a built-in battery and antenna. It proved to be the right solution for Lipman.

"It took us strongly into a recognition level with processors, and that's when we started to get notice from the industry," says Zenou.

Zenou says Lipman's business strategy focuses on two issues plus a key differentiator:

• **Reliability**: "Our number one philosophy is reliability because we can't afford to make mistakes. We had an incident in 1995 with a loose connector that nearly took us out of the game. While it wasn't anything major or fundamental, merely a production-line problem, we saw how the industry would not be tolerant of any newcomer. Today, our line averages less than 15 basis points failure."

• Flexibility: "We created a platform that enables us to go backward to existing models and forward to new terminals we are building. Our source codes are always compatible with old and new products. Our terminals look the same, have similar keyboards, but what makes the difference is the value we add to every terminal with sophisticated software. That helps us maintain our customers. We are very proud to say, 'We're not the cheapest in the industry, but we don't lose customers.' That means our product is strong, the value is high and the demand is high."

The differentiator – commitment to adding value: "We have become even more pioneering in our efforts, truly innovative. We go to areas other people are not willing to explore or invest in. We are willing to invest in solutions our customers want. They ask for something and we say, 'Give us the chance to build it for you.' We are allowing ISOs to control their destiny by providing them software to complement our products."

Those areas include check truncation, wireless capabilities, signature capture and Web-based solutions.

According to Zenou, Lipman recently was ranked as the No. 1-valuated POS company in the world. Zenou says that 60% of all ISO terminal sales in the U.S. are Lipman. Lipman reported a 27% in growth in the last year and owes it all to its solutions, platform and approach to customer service.

Those customers are both wireless and landline centric, with 75% of its sales shifted to landlocked merchants with fixed wireless needs. One of its hottest new offerings is the NURIT 3020, a continuation of the 2085 line with modifications for a smaller footprint. It showcases advanced embedded features including a high-speed modem, larger memory, smaller size and graphic display.

"We originally thought that in the U.S. bigger was better," Zenou says. "Apparently, the taste of clients is becoming more European, more dynamic, smaller and rounder. So now we have designed a new product with more application, more storage, fast modem encased in a smaller footprint."

While the focus of the 3020 is the larger independent sales agent or processor, the ISOs and distribution channels remain at the forefront of the success of the 2085 line. With the 2085 as well as 3020, Lipman offers terminal recognition with a private-label program that complements the solutions tied in on the back end, such as signature capture and check truncation.

"We are enabling users to save substantial dollars while allowing us to upgrade and offer much richer software apps to our terminals," says Zenou. "It's the same logic as always, but this time we tie in more and brand it."



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For the smaller ISOs, the NURIT 3020 is the solution Lipman hopes will ensure their continued loyalty.

"We asked ourselves, 'How do we get companies like NPC and Vital, who purchase thousands of units a year, not to jeopardize our core ISO business?' " says Zenou. "The answer was simple: Sell a different product with similar features so the small ISOs can play in the game, too. In fact, as our current products become even more widely available, Lipman will introduce their successors, such as our 8320 Secure and 8085 ATM interface with one ARM-based processors.

The 2,000 ISOs that Lipman works with enjoy a myriad of benefits. Lipman offers a simple buy rate for its terminals. According to Zenou, the difference is that each Lipman terminal is enabled with prepaid services, loyalty and gift card and back-end services such as NURIT Capture and NURIT Store Manager.

Depending on the environment, Lipman will customize its terminals to meet the needs of its ISOs. All apps are modular, so Lipman can maintain one source code, one platform and one operating system. Lipman also enjoys across-the-board Class A certification status with all major hosts.



"ISOs are looking for revenue, reliability and simplicity," says Zenou. "Whatever and whenever their need, Lipman can provide it. We anticipate the needs of our ISOs and processors and often survey them on their needs."

Another ISO benefit that Zenou is keen on is the cost of ownership. "It costs ISOs less if they don't have to service their terminals. Ours are easy to maintain, easy to service. If you manage a portfolio of hundreds or even thousands of terminals and they don't break down, then that's one less worry for our customers."

He adds, "We treat ISOs not just as salespeople selling product but as pioneers. They are the true entrepreneurs of this industry. Lipman is an ISO company. This industry has become a very ISO-spirited industry. There is no doubt today that the driving force behind the processors

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are ISOs, and Lipman is very influential to a large portion of those ISOs.

"ISOs come in different flavors, but it doesn't matter. Some shoot for price strictly. We simply need to work harder to convince them the value is there past the price. We are predominantly working with ISOs who are looking for value, stability and continuity and recognize that we are the company who supports that approach. Those are the ISOs who are great Lipman customers."

Lipman recently introduced yet another program to keep its ISOs happy. It's appropriately called NURIT VIP, as in Value Incentive Program. Lipman recognized the problem facing the industry with prices decreasing and margins shrinking. Another issue was maintaining feedback from all of those feet on the street, keeping in constant communication with its ISOs and rewarding them for their loyalty. How could Lipman give them a tool to enable them to feel positive at the end of the day? The answer was NURIT VIP on MyNURIT.com, a business portal to support its unusual incentive program.

"MyNURIT.com is a full logistic management of terminals from start to finish, all Web-based," says Zenou. "Most important for us was to start with an element of reward for loyalty, showing our gratitude for customer retention. We wanted to make sure that the benefit of providing this program was free terminals, gifts and dollars.

"ISOs can log in and get direct compensation and reward to their place of business through points. The program involves Web training, updates, surveys and positive as well as negative feedback. We believe where the money is, the attention will be."

Lipman's NURIT VIP provides for points to be accumulated and redeemed for free equipment, prizes and cash conversion. It allows for various levels of compensation for agents, subagents and managers. Distributors as well can work with Lipman through this program and redeem points rather than drop prices. Customized incentive programs will be offered for different participants.

An added bonus for MyNURIT.com users is Lipman's new interactive training tool. Once logged into the portal, resellers will be able to obtain immediate, hands-on training for such devices as the NURIT 3020, the 2059i, the 2085 and the new NURIT 8000 wireless solution.

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ask one of Lipman's ISO partners, Cynergy Data, an ISO that forged its relationship with Lipman more than five years ago.

"It's been an amazing experience," says Marcelo Paladini, President/CEO of Cynergy Data. "One of the key factors in our relationship was Mike Grossman (Lipman's Vice President, Sales). He was a key in establishing that relationship. Until someone gets to know you, they help up to a point. Lipman took the time to get to know us, especially with Mike being in the same city. He is always open to suggestions and solutions to any problem. He got us short terms, saw we were reliable and extended those terms. All issues were worked out thoroughly to get them resolved."

Paladini continues, "When it comes to equipment sales, we recommend Lipman because they are very userfriendly and easy to operate from a merchant standpoint. There are less keys, making transactions less confusing. From my perspective, that's a key factor."

Another strong Lipman alliance is found with Infinity Data, an ISO based in Brockton, Mass. "We've been working with Lipman since 1996, and it's been the best thing," says Brian Mills, President of Infinity Data. "They're great people to work with as far as having product availability. We enjoy a very good relationship. As for the products themselves, regardless of the relationship, the best feature is how easy it is to train merchants. They're easy for merchants to use. Servicing is just as easy.

"Ninety-eight percent of the products we sell are Lipman. We have tried others on and off and always come back to Lipman. The terminals are fantastic. Issues are easily dealt with at their help desk because of the nature of their terminals. Programming is easy. Downloading is easy. I can't remember hearing any negative comments from our merchants."

Lipman recently signed a big deal with another major industry player, Concord EFS. "Their commitment is above and beyond," says Kevin Smith, Senior Vice President of ISO Sales and General Manager of Concord Payment Systems.

Lipman also boasts profitable partnerships with such other companies as Global Payments, MSI, Lynk and U.S. Wireless Data. Then there are providers such as Interlink Electronics for signature-enabled transactional services, RichSolutions for signature and check-retrieval services and APRIVA and U.S. Wireless Data for complementary gateway solutions.

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## NEW PRODUCTS



### Don't Buy What You Don't Need

Omni 7000MPD VeriFone, Inc.

s new payment technologies hit the market, so do new payment terminals – they're loaded with all of the latest features and functions. Merchants want to offer customers the widest range of payment methods but might wonder if they really need to provide what is not yet being used; after all, biometrics, smart cards and contactless payments are still evolving. Current customers require more traditional methods of payment: cash, checks, credit and debit cards. VeriFone's Omni 7000MPD (modular payment device) gives merchants the option to purchase what's needed now and upgrade later if they want.

The Omni 7000 has all of the standard features of a pointof-sale terminal: a 32-bit processor, an ATM-style interface with four screen-addressable keys, four function keys, a large backlit display (up to eight lines), an integrated PIN pad (3DES and PED compliant), a triple-track card reader, 3 megabytes of memory and multiple cabling configurations for connecting with ECRs or peripherals such as check readers.

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What sets this terminal apart from others is its flexibility and open platform. VeriFone offers optional modules for emerging technologies that merchants can add directly to the Omni 7000 in the field when needed rather than sending the product back to VeriFone.

Possible enhancements include electronic signature capture on the display screen, EMV-compliant smart card capabilities, Ethernet and USB connectivity and radio frequency identification (RFID) for contactless payments.

VeriFone's optional electronic signature capture module includes a touch screen-enabled display lens and technology that secures signatures for storage and retrieval. Since smart card applications have not been widely adopted yet in the U.S., smart card capabilities can be added when needed.

USB connections provide faster communications between payment devices and peripherals; high-speed Ethernet connects payment terminals directly to a company's local area network (LAN) so companies can store payment information in corporate databases or can display ads on terminals without slowing transaction speed.

Superior Super Warehouse, an independently owned grocery supercenter chain based in Santa Fe Springs, Calif., has implemented the Omni 7000. VeriFone worked with Lynk Systems, Inc., Superior's payment processor, to provide the software solution for the Omni 7000, which connects directly to StoreNext's ISS45 POS system and integrates with Lynk's Integra electronic payment-processing solution.

VeriFone offers a three-year warranty on the Omni 7000 and a one-year warranty on all field-replaceable modules and the display.

#### VeriFone, Inc.

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### Self-Service Gets Even Better

Opteva

Diebold, Inc.

ATMs, the Opteva collection. Diebold said it conducted extensive research in 18 countries in order to develop the products, which offer advanced features and flexibility.

The Opteva family of ATMs includes the Opteva 760, an advanced function, through-the-wall, walk-up ATM; the Opteva 720, an advanced function, lobby ATM; the Opteva 560, a through-the-wall, walk-up cash dispenser; and the Opteva 520, a lobby cash dispenser.

The ATMs were designed with an open platform so financial institutions can customize Diebold's solutions in order to fit their own needs. Diebold built the Optevas with USB 2.0 architecture, which allows the machines to easily integrate with future technologies and make faster transactions through high-speed communications with ATM peripherals. In addition, each machine operates on an Intel Pentium 4 processor. Some of the features of the Opteva include a five-cassette dispenser that distributes high volumes of currency. Most ATMs come with four cassettes. The fifth cassette can dispense stamps, coupons, tickets or other items to increase revenue without decreasing cash-dispensing capacity. Diebold says the Optevas have the first two-color receipt printer with high-resolution printer capabilities for graphics.

Consumers will like it, too. The ATMs come with a standard 15.1-inch flat panel LCD screen for easy viewing, and sunlight viewable and touch-screen options are available. The ATMs can accept check and cash deposits without envelopes and have bulk-note acceptors for crediting up to 100 notes at a time.

In order to manage the ATM networks, Diebold also offers remote maintenance, professional services, managed services and outsourcing for the Opteva ATMs.

#### Diebold, Inc.

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#### NEWS

#### Visa Wants Account Numbers Off Receipts

In an effort to help combat fraud and identity theft, **Visa U.S.A.** will implement a new account truncation policy that will require its merchants with new point-of-sale card terminals to display only the last four digits of a customer's credit card number on receipts and to eliminate the card's expiration date from receipts.

The policy goes into effect July 1, 2003. Visa wants all merchants and all terminals to comply with the rule by July 2006. (MasterCard said adoption of its all-terminal policy goal is April 2005.)

Members of Congress, led by Sen. Diane Feinstein (D., Calif.), have introduced legislation that would require all credit card terminals to truncate credit card numbers within four years. Fifteen states, including California, have phased out the use of terminals that display all of a customer's account information.

#### FDC to Pay \$3 Million in Settlement

**First Data Corp.** will pay the U.S. Department of the Treasury \$3 million in a settlement for allegedly failing to notify federal authorities of suspicious transactions through its subsidiary **Western Union**. Anti-money laundering laws, which took effect in January 2002, require banks and other businesses to report suspicious transactions made by their customers.

In a report filed with the Securities Exchange Commission, First Data neither admitted nor denied the charges. The company agreed to do more testing of its compliance systems by June 30, 2003 and to file new reports on suspicious transactions from 2002 at U.S. locations.

#### **Capital One CFO Resigns**

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**David M. Willey**, Executive Vice President and CFO of **Capital One Financial Corp.**, resigned March 3, 2003 after receiving a Wells notice from the SEC. The notice alerted Willey that he likely would be charged with insider trading in a civil lawsuit. (Recipients of a Wells notice are allowed to explain their side of the story and possibly convince regulators that action against them is unnecessary.) Neither the company nor any other member of management received a Wells notice.

The SEC is investigating Willey's sale of shares and exercise of stock options two months before Capital One announced an increase in reserves for bad loans, which caused its stock to drop 40%. The company is currently looking for a new CFO. Dave Lawson, President and CEO of Capital One Auto Finance, will assume the role of acting CFO until a replacement for Willey is found.

#### 308,000 Jobs Lost in February 2003

The unemployment rate reached 5.8% in February 2003 (a 10th of a percentage point higher than the previous month), after U.S. businesses cut 308,000 jobs, the **U.S. Labor Department** reported. Nearly 8.5 million people were unemployed in February.

The February job cuts are the largest since November 2001, when companies slashed 327,000 jobs after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.



- ➤ A Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi survey of 78 U.S. retail chain stores reported that same-store sales increased 0.8% in February 2003 compared with an increase of 6.2% a year ago. Economists attribute the flat sales to winter storms across the country, a lackluster economy and the threat of war with Iraq.
- ➤ The Home Depot, Inc. estimates that it will open 200 stores in 2003; 84 of these stores will be outside big cities in more rural areas, The New York Times reported.
- Retail property vacancies in northern New Jersey's major shopping corridors dropped to a historic low of 2.0% during 2002, according to R.J. Brunelli & Co., Inc.'s 13th annual study of this area.
- ► Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. will open Sam's Club warehouse stores in three cities in Ontario, Canada.
- ➤ The Commerce Department reported consumer spending dipped 0.1% in January 2003, its first drop since September 2002.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### InterCept Consolidates Merchant Services

**InterCept, Inc.** has restructured its merchant services division. Effective March 1, 2003, all of InterCept's merchant services operations, including Internet Billing Co., InterCept Payment Solutions (formerly Electronic Payment Exchange) and InterCept's merchant portfolio operations in Tennessee, will operate as a single business unit known as InterCept Payment Solutions, Inc. John M. Perry will oversee the unit as Chief Executive Officer. Several new key appointments were announced as part of the restructuring (see Appointments section of FYISOs).

#### Intellect Announces EMV 2000 Certification

Melbourne, Australia-based **Intellect** announced that its AERO terminal is the world's first EMV 2000 Level 1certified mobile device. The AERO is widely used in international markets such as Australia, Brazil, Germany, Greece and The Netherlands by organizations and businesses such as police forces, delivery companies and taxi firms.

#### **CrossCheck Products Show Increased Use**

**CrossCheck, Inc.** announced significant growth in the use of its check payment and guarantee systems, ChecksByNet and CheckNow. The total dollar amount of checks processed through ChecksByNet in 2002 increased 164.8% from 2001, and the total dollar amount of checks processed through CheckNow in 2002 increased 497.6%.

ChecksByNet enables online consumers to write checks over the Internet. With CheckNow, consumers give merchants check information over the phone or fax, and the merchant submits it to CrossCheck through a secure Web page.

#### **Tranax Releases Another 3DES ATM**

**Tranax Technologies, Inc.** released another fully compliant 3DES-encrypted ATM – the Mini-Bank 2100 ATM (Tranax earlier announced the availability of its 3DEScompliant Mini-Bank 1500 ATM). According to Visa, effective Jan. 1, 2003 all newly deployed ATMs should support 3DES. For MasterCard, all new-to-market ATMs must be compliant by April 1, 2003, and existing ATMs must be compliant by April 1, 2005.

#### TransAKT certified by Moneris

**Wildcard Wireless Solutions Inc.**'s wireless point-ofsale terminal, the TransAKT, received certification from Moneris Solutions Corp. and is fully certified and available for sale in Canada.

#### PARTNERSHIPS

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#### Infinity Data Goes with Lipman

**ISO Infinity Data Corp.** will purchase and deploy more than 6,000 of Lipman Transaction Solution's NURIT point-of-sale terminals over the next year. The agreement between Lipman and Infinity Data is valued at approximately 1.8 million dollars. In addition, TASQ Technology, part of First Data Merchant Services, a subsidiary of First Data Corp., extended its agreement with Lipman to include both wired and wireless NURIT products.

#### TDS, Hypercom, Visa Team Up at Drive-thru

Hypercom Corp., Texas Digital Systems, Inc. (TDS) and Visa U.S.A. have combined their technologies at quick service restaurants' drive-thrus in a pilot program, enabling patrons to pay for their food and beverages using credit or debit cards. TDS is integrating its order-confirmation displays with Hypercom's card payment terminals and Visa's processing services. The program is being tested initially at five locations in the Atlanta area; other locations will follow in Florida, Georgia, Ohio and Wisconsin.

#### **Bridgeview Chooses Golden Eagle**

**Bridgeview Payment Solutions**, a subsidiary of Bridgeview Bank, selected **Golden Eagle Leasing**, **Inc.**'s microticket leasing program for its credit card transactions. The companies expect the partnership to result in several thousand leases.

#### **Experian Hires CardCops**

**Experian** announced plans to use **CardCops.com**'s proprietary technology to fight credit card fraud. Experian will offer the service to financial institutions that grant credit cards or process online credit card transactions. CardCops monitors the Internet daily, looking for compromised credit cards issued by participating Experian clients.

#### SafeCHECK and PhoneCharge Partner

**SafeCHECK** will combine its online electronic check verification and processing technology with **PhoneCharge, Inc.**'s (PCI) interactive voice response system to provide merchants with the ability to accept checks over the phone and the Internet.

#### Global Payments to Authorize for Visa

**Global Payments Inc.** will participate in **Visa U.S.A.**'s POS Check Service program as an acquiring processor and a third-party check authorization source. Global Payments will provide services such as authorization, capture, clearing and settlement. The program will be available in the U.S. market in early third quarter 2003.





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#### FDC Picks RDM Imagers

**RDM Corp.** announced **First Data Corp.** will "Class A" certify its MICR imaging peripherals. RDM also will integrate the products with First Data's TeleCheck Electronic Check Acceptance service, which integrates checks to electronic items. The imaging products will be sold through all First Data sales channels.

#### SchlumbergerSema in Citi Cards

**SchlumbergerSema** provided **Citi Cards**, a part of Citigroup, the smart cards, card readers, loyalty applications and software applications for its smart card products, the "Citi.You card" and the "Citi Smart Card." Schlumberger's technology includes the Cyberflex Palmera 32K, a secure, multi-application financial smart card for credit and debit and loyalty programs.

#### NPC Processing for MGMA Members

National Processing Co. (NPC), subsidiary of National Processing, Inc., announced it is now a Medical Group Management Association (MGMA) AdminiServe partner. Through the partnership, NPC will provide merchant processing services such as card authorization and settlement services for Visa, MasterCard and debit transactions to MGMA's 19,000 members.

#### TeleCheck at CVS/pharmacy

**CVS/pharmacy** will use First Data Corp.'s **TeleCheck Services, Inc.** database service for verification and authorization of customers' paper checks at the pointof-sale. TeleCheck's database of check writer information contains data from more than 340,000 subscribers.

#### ACQUISITIONS

#### Symbol Acquires 2nd Company

**Symbol Technologies, Inc.** acquired **ImageWare Technologies, Inc.**, provider of customer relationship management (CRM) and mass-customization software solutions for the retail marketplace. Symbol will integrate ImageWare's software with its own solutions, such as mobile POS, product locator, mobile voice-over IP and integrated mobile payment solutions. This comes on the heels of Symbol's acquisition of the assets of **@pos** in September 2002.

#### First Merchants Acquires CNBC Bancorp

Muncie, Ind.-based **First Merchants Corp.** completed its merger with **CNBC Bancorp** of Columbus, Ohio. CNBC Bancorp and Commerce National Bank, its wholly owned subsidiary, will become the first affiliate bank headquartered in Ohio under First Merchants Corp.'s family of 10 community banks. Commerce National Bank will continue to operate as a separate entity with its own charter and board of directors.

#### **Cardtronics Buys More ATMs**

**Cardtronics** reported its ATM network has reached 10,000 machines with the acquisition of **XtraCash ATM**, **Inc.**'s ATMs and processing contracts for 938 Winn-Dixie stores located throughout the Southeast. Cardtronics also recently acquired 22 ATMs and contracts from CenterCourt Cash, Inc. in February 2003 and 1,200 ATMs from Diebold, Inc. in October 2002.

#### **APPOINTMENTS**

#### **Restructuring at InterCept**

As part of a restructuring in its merchant services division, InterCept, Inc. announced the appointment of several new key officers. **Raymond Moyer**, President, CEO and founder of Electronic Payments Exchange (EPX), was named President of InterCept Payment Solutions; **Tim Barnett** will serve as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of InterCept Payment Solutions; **Julie Counterman** was named Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer for InterCept Payment Solutions; and **Pam Clepper** was named Executive Vice President of the financial institution division of InterCept Payment Solutions.

#### **PULSE Hires Financial Industry Vet**

PULSE EFT Association announced **Marie Braeutigam** has joined its sales and member development team, serving the Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania markets. Braeutigam has more than 25 years of experience in the financial industry: she worked 22 years with Kalamazoo, Mich.-based First of America Bank (now National City of Cleveland) and the last four years at the NYCE network in EFT processing sales.

#### **Two Sales Managers Join UBC**

United Bank Card, Inc. (UBC) hired **Brian Jones** and **Tom Goad** as National Sales Managers to serve in UBC's ISO Relations department. Jones previously worked at Concord EFS, Inc., and Goad served as the former Vice President of Redwood Merchant Services.

#### **ImageWare Founder Continues at Symbol**

**Bryan Amaral** joined Symbol Technologies, Inc. as Vice President of Clienteling and Personalization Solutions for the Retail-Mobile Commerce Division. Amaral, a 20year retail technology industry veteran, was the founder and Chief Executive Officer of ImageWare, which Symbol Technologies recently acqired.

#### **CNBC Founder Joins First Merchants Board**

**Thomas D. McAuliffe**, founder and President of CNBC Bancorp, which recently merged with First Merchants Corp., will join the First Merchants Board of Directors.

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### **Tips for Travel**

ome of you will attend the ETA in Las Vegas next month. For anyone who travels, the world has changed dramatically. Patience is tested more than once at the airport. But getting upset doesn't help anything and may only serve to make the waits longer and that much more unpleasant. After all, the added security is there for our benefit.

Here are some tips for dealing with the delays and keeping calm throughout the process.

• Make sure you have a good meal before you leave for the airport. If you arrive hungry and things go wrong, you might find it more difficult to remain composed.

• Allow yourself enough time to get ready. If you start your trip rushed, you are likely to feel rushed for the entire trip.

• Prepare yourself mentally for delays. Anyone who has ever flown on a commercial airliner also has sat on the runway for long periods of time. Make sure you have work to do or a book to read.

• The security checkpoints are not going to go away. You know they are there, and you know that there is likely to be a line. Yes, you even might have to take off your shoes. Strike up a conversation with someone else in line instead of complaining. You never know where you will find your next prospect.

• The agents at the ticket counter who just told you that your flight has been delayed did not cause the delay. Yelling at them will not make the flight take off on time. Keep in mind that they are merely doing their job and you are not the only angry passenger. Being especially nice to them will get you more service, especially in the case of a canceled flight. Just be thankful you are not the one behind the counter.

• Keep your sense of humor. Smile at someone and try to help them feel a little better. If you are angry and tense you may lose sight of the reason you are making this journey. By remaining cheerful, you will arrive at your destination ready for whatever awaits you.

## INSPIRATION - -

### Getting Organized ... AND Staying Organized

o you spent \$350 on new file folders, colored labels, sorters, drawers and holders. You meticulously went through every piece of paper you could find and got rid of those creative writing pieces from the third grade.

Every pen, paper clip and rubber band is neatly stored in its place. Looking around with a sense of pride, you think that the 35 hours spent getting organized was well worth it. Now you can be efficient and productive.

Fast-forward six months ... where is that contract? You dig





#### **ETA 2003 Annual Meeting and Expo**

**Highlights:** "Beat the Odds" and raise the stakes for your company's success at the Electronic Transactions Association's big annual gathering in Las Vegas. Companies from all areas of the financial services industry will be there showcasing products and services; attendees from executives to vendors will have plenty of networking opportunities. The event opens on Tuesday, April 8 with meeting registration, an all-day golf tournament and an evening welcoming party with exhibitors. An ETA University Basic Training session is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. General and educational sessions and an exhibition covering 50,000 square feet will follow April 9-10.

When: April 8-10, 2003

Where: MGM Grand, Las Vegas

- **Registration Fees:** Vary by ETA membership status, workshop selections, activities and registration date.
- How to Sign Up: Visit www.electran.org, phone 800-695-5509 or e-mail Shawn Canfield at ETA headquarters at s.canfield@electran.org

#### Western Payments Alliance ACH Origination Workshop

**Highlights:** Do you have a clear understanding of the ACH process? Do you know everything you need to know about origination, the risks involved, and the warranties, liabilities and obligations of originators or originating depository financial institutions? These one-day workshops at three West Coast locations are designed to give anyone involved in ACH operations a complete overview of all the ins and outs of ACH. If you handle ACH operations, customer service, marketing/sales, project management or compliance/audits, you'll gain tools to properly assess and manage risks and liabilities associated with ACH origination. A basic understanding of ACH is required. Lunch is provided.

When<br/>and9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.April 8, 2003Eugene Hilton,<br/>Eugene, Ore.Where:9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.April 9Doubletree Club Hotel,<br/>El Segundo, Calif.

9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. April 10 .....Doubletree Hotel, Sacramento, Calif.

**Registration Fees:** Vary by WesPay membership status and attendees per organization.

How to Register: Phone 415-373-1188. Visit www.wespay.org



through the piles, desperately looking for it. The client is impatient and holding on the phone. Not in this pile, maybe on that chair ... you groan as the paper clips fall off the desk and scatter all over the floor. What went wrong?

Getting organized is not a one-time-only job. It involves not only cleaning up the mess but also learning how to keep it cleaned up. It seems like a lot of work, but the time spent keeping things orderly will save you time in the end.

Start by working on your attitude toward organization. Most of us do not want to be bothered with putting things away every time we use them. After all, we are just going to need that file again tomorrow.

The problem with this approach is that by the time tomorrow arrives, nine other things that are going to be used in the near future have piled up on top of the file we need. Multiply this phenomenon by seven and you can see that within a week things are pretty much back to square one.

Remind yourself that the 15 seconds spent putting that file away and then the 15 seconds used to pull it out of the file drawer when you need it again might save you anywhere from two to 20 minutes in the future.

One of the great enemies to staying organized is the mail. It comes in by the truckload, it seems. And it doesn't throw itself away. Open the mail daily. Make it a routine. Toss all of the junk mail immediately. Opening the mail directly over a trash can be a timesaving ritual.

Staying organized can be easy if you make it all a part of your routine. If you keep forcing yourself to put things away each time you use them, before long it will be automatic and you won't have to spend hours every six months or so cleaning up.

You will be able to service your customers in a timelier manner and appear more professional in all of your business dealings.

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