

# The Green Sheet

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

December 12, 2005 • Issue 05:12:01

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# PayPal: Nickel and Diming Its Way to Dominance

hen PayPal burst upon the online scene in the fall of 1999, offering consumers \$10 to start an account, a few pundits predicted that the company would change the world of Internet purchasing; few suspected how much impact it would have on financial services. But with the explosive growth of online retail sales, the effects are starting to be seen—and feared.

PayPal, now owned by eBay Inc., is no longer an upstart. PayPal's payment volume in 2004 was \$18.9 billion. The company currently claims to have more than 86 million accounts and is adding 83,000 a day. PayPal is growing at an annual rate of 44%. EBay's President and Chief Executive Officer, Meg Whitman, recently told analysts that the company estimates that one in three online shoppers in America now has a PayPal account.

According to Gartner Inc. research, PayPal's recent micropayments initiative (announced Aug. 31, 2005) could lead to market domination. "PayPal's micropayment strategy may precede plans to manage more traditional payments as well as online transactions," said Avivah Litan, Gartner Research Vice President. "It's a sound business decision and one that is likely to lead to market domination."

"PayPal has recently lowered its micropayment transaction fees to 5% plus \$0.05 because the company recognizes that, with this pricing, it can fit into a merchant's arsenal and grow its relationships with a variety of vendors who may not have considered accepting PayPal at first glance," said Dan Schatt, Senior Analyst at Celent, a market research firm.

"PayPal continues to win support

among small and large online merchants alike," he said. "This is an opportunity for it to leverage a competitive advantage it has with merchants in the form of lower funding costs. It costs PayPal significantly less money to take money from a consumer's checking account than it costs a merchant to take money from Visa or MasterCard."

PayPal's recent moves show it's eyeing a horizon beyond the eBay community. "When we first started looking into the micropayment market, we looked closely at music downloads, Napster and iTunes for example, and what we found is that because of our payment pricing we can offer merchants a painless way to accept true download sales," said PayPal spokeswoman Sara Bettencourt.

"It just doesn't make sense to accept a \$0.99 payment if the fees are too high. With our microprocessing fees, a true download model, rather than just a subscription model, becomes workable for merchants," she said.

In November, eBay completed its \$370 million acquisition of VeriSign (see "EBay Has Eye on Payments Business," By Patti Murphy, Oct. 24, 2005, issue 05:10:02). The VeriSign deal allows PayPal to beef up its security and extend its reach beyond the eBay community. The eBay mar-

See PayPal on Page 67

How about a terminal that's actually FREE!

Seems like everyone is offering Free terminals these days, but most of these offers aren't really Free. At North American Bancard we pride ourselves on being the best. After all that's what our agent partners deserve and have come to expect from NAB.

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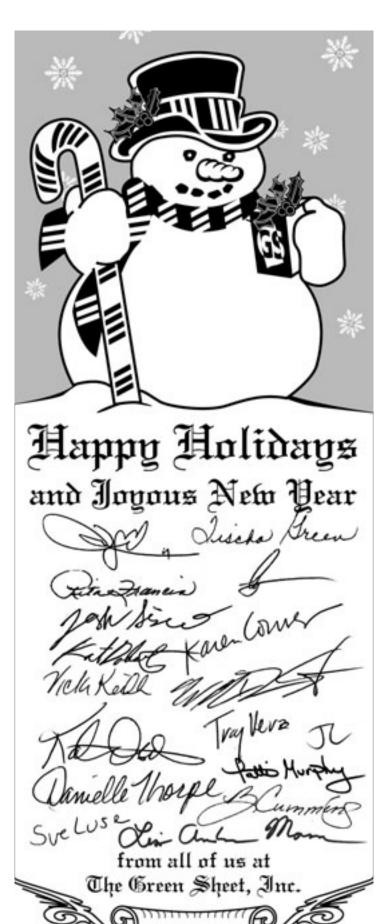
"[E]very purchase is made based on some type of differentiator. Price is always the easiest sale to make, but it also pays the least. ... Differentiate your sales offering and profit from it through increased sales and higher margins."



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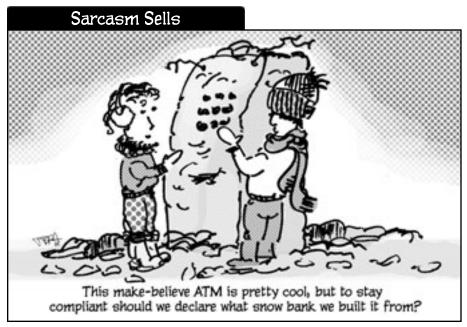
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#### Praise and a Suggestion for GS Online

Your site is EXTREMELY useful and comprehensive. Very high praise for the knowledge you have gathered.

One suggestion is to have the date published for the articles right in the body of the article. I know that if you were to do a search, the two or three line descriptions that come up show the date, but once you click to get the full article the date is not on that screen.

Just a thought I wanted to share, but keep up the great work.

- Tony Seto Gridley & Company LLC

Tony:

Thanks for your comments. We are looking into including the issue date with each article on GS Online.

Editor

#### Where to Submit Press Releases?

Please forgive me because I am new to The Green Sheet. I was curious if you have a general e-mail address in which we may be able to send over a press release, or do you have a resource that I may learn of in which The Green Sheet edition "captures" press releases? Thanks for your time.

– Brent Smith Cyclone Software Brent:

Thanks for your interest in The Green Sheet. We post press releases covering industry news, mergers and acquisitions, appointments, partnerships, certifications, new products and more, throughout the day on GS Online's "News From the Wire" section at www.greensheet.com/onlineindex.html .

Please send all press releases to press@greensheet.com .

Editor

#### Looking for the ISO List

Can you tell me if The Green Sheet has published a list of ISOs that sell merchant payment acceptance solutions? I am doing research and looking for 10 – 20 names of companies in this sector of the ISO business. Any help you can give me to point me in the right direction would be appreciated.

– B. H.

B.H.:

Thanks for your e-mail. Unfortunately, we do not publish the list you are looking for. There are countless independent sales organizations (ISOs) that sell merchant payment acceptance solutions. Try using our Fast Finder search capabilities on our Web site (www.greensheet.com/search.cgi) to narrow your search.

We do report on the top billion dollar bankcard acquirers (companies that acquire merchant accounts, process their payments, and sell payment processing services) every year in our GSQ acquiring report. You may view archived GSQs at www.greensheet.com/gsq/Secured-/gsqissues.html . We will publish the 2005 GSQ acquiring report this month.

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# What's better than a "Free Terminal?"

# How about a terminal that's actually FREE!

Seems like everyone is offering Free terminals these days, but most of these offers aren't really Free. At North American Bancard we pride ourselves on being the best. After all that's what our agent partners deserve and have come to expect from NAB.

That's why we've worked hard to come out with the best Free Terminal Program in the business. The best equipment. An industry leading residual program with a \$500 conversion bonus plus a \$100 activation bonus. No Hassles. No fine print. Just the very best program out there. What else would you expect from North American Bancard?







Short on time? This section of The Green Sheet provides a quick summary of nearly all the articles in this issue to help keep you up to date on the latest news and hot topics in the payments industry.

Cover Story

# PayPal: Nickel and Diming Its Way to Dominance

When PayPal burst upon the online scene in the fall of 1999, offering consumers \$10 to start an account, few suspected how much impact it would have on the financial services world. But with the explosive growth of online retail sales, the effects are starting to be seen—and feared.

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Feature

#### AgenTalk<sup>sm</sup>: Learning From the Good and the Bad

Melonie Dickey, an MLS based in Southern California, brings enthusiasm and a fresh perspective to a competitive and rapidly changing industry. In an interview with The Green Sheet, she discusses her niche market and why bad experiences are an important part of growing.

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Feature

#### Compliance With New PLUS Rules Requires Long-term Investment, Planning

From ATMmarketplace. For more than a year, Visa U.S.A. has spread the word about revisions to PLUS network rules concerning ATM operators. So when the Nov. 1, 2005, deadline for all new merchant ATM agreements came and went, no ISO or financial institution should have been caught off guard.

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View

## How Important Are the BIN and ICA to ISOs?

From time to time, at the beginning of a negotiation with a semi-experienced sales organization, I hear "I want my own BIN and ICA" or "I need merchant portability." Rarely, however, are either of these statements fully thought through.

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Feature

#### Mastering Change ... Surfer Style

Feeling overwhelmed by how quickly everything in life, from technology to communications and business, is changing? The solution is simple: Learn to surf. A review of Frank F. Lunn's "Carpe Aqualis! 7 Essential Surfing Skills to Revolutionize Your Business and Personal Life."

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News

## Wal-Mart Moves Further Into Financial Services

Despite a rash of recent criticism from the financial services industry, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. continues to forge ahead. Much to the chagrin of Massachusetts bankers, the retailing giant recently applied to institute check-cashing operations at all of its 44 stores in that state.

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Education

#### Street Smarts<sup>SM</sup>: Psychological Selling: Motivating the MLS, Part II

Our product suites seem to change almost daily, it's hard to get support when it's needed, and we hear more No's and have more doors slammed in our faces than do sales reps in other industries. So how do we manage to go out there and make the sale every day?

Page 76

# Our Proven Merchant Lead Generation Program Will Leave Your Competitors in the Dust.

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#### Education

#### Click Print, Close Deals

Conventional wisdom says that good salespeople need only their wits to sign merchants. But sometimes a solid sales pitch simply isn't enough to win them over. When words alone fail to convince merchants to sign on the dotted line, it's time to bring out the big guns: printed marketing materials.

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#### Education

#### Increase Sales Through Differentiation

A respectable sales veteran said this the other day: "We don't need to differentiate to sell." Reflecting on this statement, the obvious hit me: Unless a purchase decision is based on chance, differentiation *is* involved in making the sale.

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#### Education

#### Many Uses for Visa's New Manual on Card Acceptance and Chargeback Management

Visa U.S.A. recently released "Rules for Visa Merchants: Card Acceptance and Chargeback Management Guidelines." All MLSs should distribute a copy to merchants with chargeback problems and keep one for themselves.

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#### Education

#### Retail via the Web: Swiping a Card Through an Internet Browser

Technology is emerging that will provide retail merchants with "Swipe via the Web." They still have a card-reader attached to their computer, but now they simply go to a Web site to process the swiped transaction.

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#### **Exceeding Expectations**

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View

## Growth and Maturity in the Payments Industry

Predicting the future is an uncertain science at best. Nevertheless, it's useful at the end of each business year to evaluate recent trends and attempt to extrapolate how they will continue to unfold in the coming year.

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Feature

# Pique Their Interest by Refreshing Your Content

Web developers must constantly come up with new hooks: tools, interactive components and essentially the stuff that will keep visitors on the site for a fair amount of time, and more important, that will keep them coming back regularly.

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## New Scrutiny for Remote Checks

The Federal Reserve Board issued a new rule that defines bank liabilities associated with remotely created checks (also known as remote drafts). The rules have been adopted as amendments to the two primary Fed regulations covering checks: Regulation CC and Regulation J.

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News

#### Visa Pursuing Small-ticket Payments

For most merchants with smaller-ticket items, cash remains king. They have eschewed accepting plastic for payment because the current interchange model does not provide a practicable solution: Interchange fees make small-ticket electronic transactions too expensive. This may soon change, however.

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Inspiration

#### Take Advantage of the Boss

If you own your own business you know first hand that the stress levels can get very high. Why do small business owners make this choice? Why would anyone subject themselves to this? Because they value the benefits that being one's own boss offers, such as control, choice and freedom.

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Inspiration

#### **Put Yourself First**

Putting your needs before your clients' is very difficult. There is probably a part of you that immediately reacts with feelings of guilt or selfishness. You are in a service industry after all. Your success depends on serving others; how can you put yourself first?

Page 113

# Does Your Business Need a Lift?

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#### **NEWS**

#### **Affluent Turn Cautious in Spending**

"The Affluent Market Tracking Study #8" by **The American Affluence Research Center** (AARC) reveals changes in spending plans of the wealthiest 10% of Americans. These 11 million households represent half of all consumer income and spending.

Their projected \$57 billion in expenditures for holiday gifts (25% of the estimated total holiday gift market) is 1.6% below 2004 spending levels.

Twenty-one percent of respondents expect to spend less for holiday gifts this year while 11% expect to spend more. View highlights of the survey at www.affluenceresearch.org.

#### **EBPP and Low-value Payments Studied**

A new report from **Aite Group**, "Bill Payments: A Biller Survey," provides an overview of the electronic bill presentment and payment (EBPP) level of adoption, billers' goals, results and technology trends.

The survey reveals that billers tend to be satisfied with EBPP's current level of adoption. However, a gap exists between the goals billers have set and their current level of success, particularly in terms of paper and postage savings, call center deflection and customer satisfaction and retention. The survey also confirms that the credit and debit card share of biller direct payments is on the rise.

Aite Group also recently examined low-value (less than \$10) payments and found that of the 138 billion cash transactions U.S. consumers make annually, 50% are less than \$10. The report, "Low-Value Payments: Looking For the Code Cracker," found that 95% of all transactions below \$10 are made in cash.

The study predicted that in the near future, the introduction of contactless bankcards will likely boost issuers' efforts to cannibalize cash; however, unless merchant acceptance costs are reduced, the high cost of bankcard processing will limit the issuers' ability to be successful.

#### Cash or Checks Top Teens' Wish List

The recent "Money Matters Holiday Survey" conducted by **Boys & Girls Clubs of America** surveyed 700 teen members nationwide. The survey revealed that 38% of teens prefer to receive cash or a check as a holiday gift.

Other in-demand gifts include cell phones or portable electronics (15%), clothing (12%) and a car (9%). As far as purchasing gifts, 27% of teens surveyed plan to spend up to \$50 on holiday gifts this year. Nearly 25% plan to spend between \$51 and \$100, and 21% intend to spend more than \$100.

#### Half of Online Households Pay a Bill Online

According to a survey conducted by CheckFree



- On March 2, 2006, ATMs, cash registers and wallets will start dispensing the new \$10 bill. More colorful than traditional U.S. currency, the new bills will contain red, yellow and orange images. The initial printing will be 800 million notes.
- Customers at Ikea soon will be able to apply for a store-branded credit card at self-service kiosk terminals. General Electric Co.'s consumer finance group is installing the terminals at Ikea's 26 U.S. stores. ►
- Market research firm comScore Networks reported that total spending that
  occurred on retail Web sites for the four-day Thanksgiving holiday reached
  \$925 million. This figure is a 24% increase over the same four days in 2004.





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**Analytic Research Services**, 56% of U.S. online households are paying at least one bill online, up from 52% in June 2004. Currently, 87% of users who pay their bills from a single "consolidated" Web site, such as a bank, credit union or Internet portal, say they receive the service for free. The survey determined that the reasons people choose to pay bills at a consolidated site are convenience, speed and control.

#### Holiday Spending Down Slightly, Conference Board Predicts

U.S. households are expected to spend an average of \$466 on gifts during the holiday season, down moderately from last year's estimate of \$476, **The Conference Board** reported. Slightly more than 32% of all households will spend \$500 or more on holiday gifts, with 37% spending \$200 – \$500, and the remaining 30% planning to spend less than \$200. About 34% of all consumers will buy holiday gifts on the Internet, up from 33% a year ago.

# Department of Homeland Security Studies Identify Theft

The **Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate** commissioned an online identity theft and phishing countermeasures report. The report, "Online Identity Theft: Technology,

Chokepoints and Countermeasures," defines online threats and assesses technology solutions and best practices as countermeasures.

Download a free copy of the identity theft report at www.antiphishing.org/Phishing-dhs-report.pdf.

#### **PIN Debit Cheaper Than Signature Debit**

PIN-based POS transactions cost financial institutions on average 50% less than signature debit transactions, according to the "2005 POS Debit Issuer Cost Study" from First Annapolis Consulting.

The average cost-per-transaction for signature debit is \$0.22 while PIN debit is \$0.116. Back-office and operating expenses account for 90% of costs for both. The study also found the average fraud losses were more than four times greater for signature debit than for PIN debit and that the average ticket amount for signature debit is \$38.34 compared with \$40.32 for PIN debit.

#### Survey Shows Gift Cards Popular With Canadians

**Givex Corp.** released its annual "National Gift Card Survey" results. SES Research, on behalf of Givex, randomly surveyed 1,003 Canadians and found that



# Is The Payment Gateway You Resell All It Can Be?

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Security	+ CISP & SDP Certified + Stable and Solid + Industry Leading Anti-DDoS Solution	ons	?
Reliability	+ Competitive Buy Rates + Reliable Residual Payments	~	?
Support	+ Free Merchant and Reseller Suppo + Extensive Third-Party Support + Dedicated Account Management	ort 🗸	?

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...To Be Continued in the Jan. 9th 2006 issue.

\* odds of winning may vary depending on the number of eligible participants.
\*\* Source: National Center for Health Statistics.

77% cited convenience and flexibility as the number one advantage of giving or receiving a gift card, up 6% over last year.

Furthermore, 73% said they spend more or the same value than what is on their gift card, while only 9% said they spend less. Sixty-three percent said they would reload their cards for convenience, discounts or free products.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **Experian Honored**

**Experian** products were named by Collection Advisor magazine as two of the Top 100 Collection Technology Products for 2005. The company received recognition for Scorex PLUS, Experian-Scorex's credit scoring model, in the Scoring category and MetroNet, Experian's consumer and commercial locater tool, in the Skip Tracing category.

#### First Data Opens Singapore Office

**First Data Corp.** officially launched its regional office in Singapore. **Grant Lines**, Senior Vice President, South Asia Business Development, First Data International, will be responsible for the daily operations of the new office and with business development for the region.

# Hypercom Moves Up in FinTech 100 Rankings

**Hypercom Corp.** climbed to the #33 spot on the FinTech 100 annual ranking of the top technology providers to the worldwide financial services industry, marking a six-point gain over last year's finish.

#### **Ingenico Gains Association Approvals**

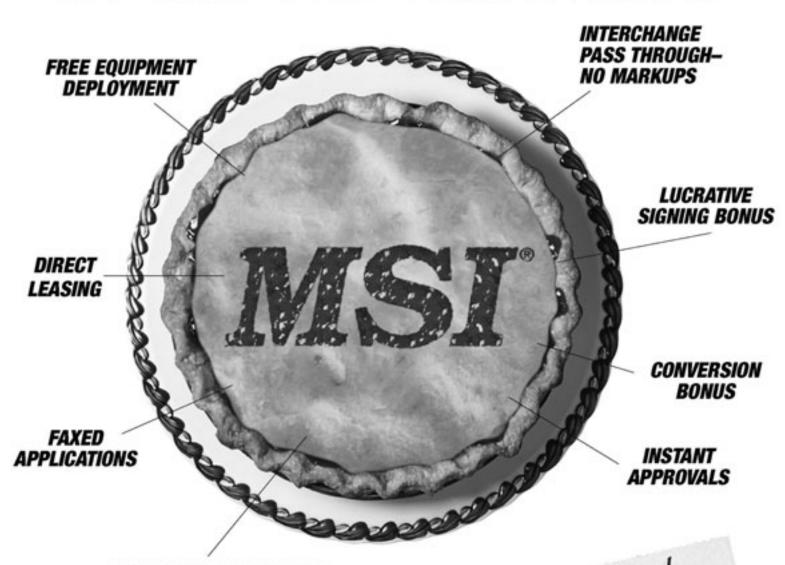
**Ingenico** received approvals for its contactless payment expansion module from MasterCard International's PayPass and Visa's MSD contactless payment.

#### Litle Inducted Into DMA Hall of Fame

Thomas J. Litle IV, Chairman of Litle & Co., has been inducted into the Direct Marketing Association Hall of Fame. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Litle created computerized order processing systems and developed systems to facilitate customer service for the credit card industry.

From 1982 to 1995, Litle built what became the industry's largest credit card payment processors for the non-face-to-face retail industry: DMGT Corp. and the original Litle & Co. (both are now part of Chase Paymentech Solutions LLC).

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These two companies processed more than 65% of all non-face-to-face direct marketing and Internet transactions in the nation, representing more than \$100 billion in non-face-to-face sales and an additional \$400 billion in other sales.

# Payment Data Systems Inc. to Sell Domain Name ▶

**Payment Data Systems Inc.** (PDS) signed a Letter of Intent to sell the domain and trademark of Bills.com to **Alivio Holdings LLC** for \$964,500. PDS will retain all assets of Bills.com exclusive of the Bills.com domain and Bills.com trademark.

Freedom Financial Network LLC, a wholly owned affiliate of Alivio, will pay PDS a recurring fee for each subscriber they acquire and guarantee \$72,000 in minimum subscriber fees to PDS. PDS will rename subsidiary Bills.com Inc. to Billx.com Inc. or a similar name.

#### **PARTNERSHIPS**

#### Bancpost and AmEx Launch Cards in Romania

**Bancpost** and **American Express Co.** (AmEx) announced the launch of the first AmEx credit cards issued in Romania. Bancpost is one of the first banks that introduced credit cards to the market and currently holds more than 22% of the local card market.

#### Central Jersey Bank and NationalCard Sign Agreement

**NationalCard Processing Systems** signed a credit card processing agreement with **Central Jersey Bank N.A.** The agreement calls for NationalCard to provide direct sales and marketing support for Central Jersey Bank N.A.'s ongoing effort to introduce credit card processing to all existing and prospective demand deposit accounts of the bank, and provide cash advance capabilities to all branches.

#### Certegy to Offer PassMark System

Certegy Inc. will integrate PassMark Security's Two-Factor Two-Way Authentication system with its Internet Banking, Cash Management and Bill Pay system. The new solution will allow Certegy's e-banking customer base to offer their customers protection from online fraud and identity theft. Certegy will begin offering the PassMark system as an add-on to the current version of its e-banking system in the first quarter of 2006.

#### **NYC Renews Official Payments Contract**

The City of New York Department of Finance renewed its contract with Official Payments Corp. to provide credit and debit card payment processing



through August 2007. The renewal enables New York City residents to continue to make their property tax payments with an AmEx, Discover, MasterCard or Visa debit or credit card, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via the city's Web site.

#### **CO-OP Network and 7-Eleven Inc. Unite**

**CO-OP Network** and **7-Eleven Inc.** reached an agreement to provide ATM access for Network members in 7-Eleven stores across the nation. Approximately 5,300 7-Eleven stores in 30 states will offer surcharge-free ATM access to 24 million credit union cardholders carrying the Network logo.

#### **Wal-Mart Accepts Debitman Cards**

**Debitman**, the electronic payment network for retailerissued debit cards, announced that **Wal-Mart Stores Inc.** is now accepting Debitman cards at checkout in all Wal-Mart and Sam's Club locations across the United States.

#### **Purpose Solutions to Launch Credit Card**

**Purpose Solutions LLC** will launch a new credit card program on the **Discover Network**. Purpose Solutions will issue the card, which is expected to be available in December, through the First Bank of Delaware. Purpose Solutions is a subsidiary of CompuCredit Corp., the 17th-largest general-purpose credit card issuer in the United States.

#### College Chooses EduCard

**Dixie State College of Utah** selected IntelleCard software from **EduCard LLC** to issue co-branded Visa debit cards, create reports and load financial disbursements to students, faculty and employees. To issue and load financial disbursements to Visa debit cards, IntelleCard interfaces with Dixie State College of Utah's operating system.

# First Data Expands Wal-Mart and Sam's Relationship

**TeleCheck Services Inc.** expanded its check services

relationship with **Wal-Mart** and **Sam's Club** stores. The expansion encompasses four check service areas. First, Wal-Mart is increasing its use of the TeleCheck Electronic Check Acceptance (ECA) service by introducing it into additional markets.

Additionally, for riskier transactions, TeleCheck is providing Wal-Mart its adaptive decisioning tools. TeleCheck is also now the primary provider of check collection services for both stores.

Finally, TeleCheck will host all shared negative database files for Wal-Mart. TeleCheck will provide returned check data to Wal-Mart, and Wal-Mart's returned check data will continue to feed TeleCheck's database.

#### Norwegian Gamer to Install Hypercom Devices

**Hypercom** received an order to provide the Optimum P1100 PIN entry payment devices to **Norsk Tipping AS**, the leading gaming company in Norway. In connection with the initial \$1 million order, the stateowned gaming firm will install the P1100 at hundreds of national lottery and betting sites throughout the country to enable consumers to use gambling smart cards within electronic games.

#### **PaySpot Partners With E-Chex**

**PaySpot Inc.** announced a partnership with **E-Chex**. The partnership enables PaySpot to offer check verification, check conversion and check guarantee to its retailers.

#### Q Comm Partners With American Cash Exchange

**Q Comm International Inc.** announced a partnership with **American Cash Exchange Inc.**, a creator of the Poni PIN Card, a United States-to-Mexico money remittance card sold in peso values. Under the terms of the agreement, Q Comm International will process sales of the Poni PIN Card in relevant geographic areas throughout the United States.

#### Valero and VeriFone Team Up

**Valero Energy Corp.** and **VeriFone** implemented an AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert distribution system. The system will disseminate critical information about missing children and their suspected abductors through VeriFone's integrated POS systems directly to Valero's more than 1,000 retail stores throughout the United States.

#### **ACQUISITIONS**

#### First Data Completes Acquisition

First Data completed the acquisition of Austrian

**Payment Systems Services GmbH** (APSS). APSS provides Austria's banking industry with debit and credit card issuing and acquiring processing, and card network operations, terminals and ATM processing.

#### **Valutec Card Solutions Acquires Mellennia**

Gift card, loyalty and stored value services provider **Valutec Card Solutions Inc.** acquired **Mellennia**. Mellennia provides off-the-shelf and customized stored-value solutions to merchants in the retail, financial, healthcare and government markets. The terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

# Metavante Completes LINK2GOV Acquisition

**Metavante Corp.** completed its acquisition of **LINK2GOV Corp**. The company will become a Metavante subsidiary and continue to operate under the LINK2GOV name.

#### APPOINTMENTS

#### First Horizon Announces Key Executives

First Horizon National Corp. announced several key executive changes. The company appointed



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**Jerry Baker** Chief Operating Officer. He will be responsible for all of First Horizon's business lines and operations. **Charles Burkett** has been appointed President of Tennessee and National Banking. He will be responsible for First Horizon's national bank expansion and Tennessee banking.

**Sarah Meyerrose** has been appointed Executive Vice President of Operations and Technology with responsibility for all business line support functions including technology, operations and servicing, corporate real estate and procurement, call centers, and employee services.

#### **Deluxe Names Interim CEO, Chairman**

Ronald E. Eilers has been named Interim Chief Executive Officer of Deluxe Corp. The board of directors separated the positions of CEO and Chairman. Stephen P. Nachtsheim has been elected non-executive Chairman of the Board. Nachtsheim has served as a Director of the company since 1995 and as Lead Independent Director since 2003.

# Pelosi to Direct Global Compliance Initiatives

Samantha Pelosi joined Ruesch International Inc.

as Director, Corporate Compliance. In addition to directing Ruesch's overall compliance program, Pelosi will serve as the company's liaison to the regulatory community. Prior to joining Ruesch, Pelosi served as Senior Counsel at the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, Department of the Treasury.

## Cash Now Appoints New CEO and President

Cash Now Corp. appointed a new CEO and President, Kevin S. Price. Price comes to Cash Now with a background in investment banking. Cash Now will continue to offer licensing of its technology and developed vendor relationships; however, in moving forward, it will place more emphasis on the sale of loans rather then the sale of the technology.

# CO-OP Network Names Vice President of Marketing

**CO-OP Network** selected **Samantha Smyth** as Vice President, Marketing. With nearly a decade of integrated marketing experience, including eight years in conjunction with the credit union industry,

Smyth will direct CO-OP Network's strategic marketing for all products and lines of business, including EFT, shared branching and risk management.



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# Agen Talk M

## Learning From the Good and the Bad

elonie Dickey, a merchant level salesperson based in Southern California, brings enthusiasm and a fresh perspective to a competitive and rapidly changing industry. In the following interview with The Green Sheet, she discusses her niche market and why bad experiences are an important part of growing.

**The Green Sheet:** What brought you into this business?

**Melonie Dickey:** I worked as a bank teller for a year prior to going to college and continued working as a teller throughout my college summer vacations. After graduating ... in 1999, I moved out to California to pursue my career in business. I was hoping to land a job working in the Internet/technology field as I love technology.

As things happen, I landed a temporary job doing statistical analysis for Humboldt Merchant Services, known then as Humboldt Bank. This led to an accounting position and

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ultimately an internal Account Executive position selling merchant services nationwide over the phone. I went out on my own in 2002.

**GS:** What type of training did you receive?

**MD:** I consider myself to be very lucky when it comes to my merchant services training and background. First and foremost, I began with one of the best companies in the industry, Humboldt Merchant Services [HMS], [run] by a great guy, Ken Musante. HMS has the same customer service values as I, and they are an honest company.

When I first began, I received industry overview training by Jamie Savant, who worked for HMS at the time and is certainly one to look up to. I worked directly for Hilda Tuel, who was a great motivator, knowledgeable superior and really enforced the importance of goal setting.

From there, I have continued to educate myself through industry magazines and as many conference and training calls [as I can attend].

**GS:** How prepared do you think newcomers are now as opposed to when you started?

**MD:** It seems there are a lot of folks jumping on board ... and really not fully understanding the industry, which leads to lack of education, which is ultimately a downfall for merchants. But I have seen these people crank out the sales, so it is not to say that they are not good or capable salespeople.

**GS:** Is it important to have sales skills *and* industry knowledge?

**MD:** For longevity in retaining the merchants, it's very important because they are going to start being charged certain fees ... and they are going to start questioning things like "Why am I being billed this?

"You told me it was 1.4% and now it's 2.5%," because they are keying in sales (or whatever the reason).

Maybe the proper needs assessment wasn't done, [the agent] didn't fully understand the merchant's core business. Anybody can go ahead and set the merchant up. The question really is, can they keep them long term? If the merchants aren't happy, they are going to look elsewhere.



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#### AgenTalk

**GS:** Is it important to be more than just a salesperson?

**MD:** I certainly consider myself to be more than just a salesperson, I consider myself a consultant. On my card I put Independent Merchant Consultant.

**GS:** How does that work to your advantage?

**MD:** By consulting with the merchant, I am able to understand their business needs in more depth. For instance, they may be keying in all of their sales, but were set up with a retail swiped account to begin with, and now they are looking elsewhere to save money.

So I begin by consulting with them on their needs, then educating them on the different types of accounts and other value-added products that may be beneficial to their business.

This not only increases their consumer confidence, but allows the merchant to be more comfortable with me and feel as if we have similar goals, which is ultimately to make their business (and mine) more profitable. Then I am not perceived as just another salesperson.

**GS:** How hard is it to stand out from the competition?

**MD:** I personally don't find it very hard. I'm honest, up front, and very persistent in my follow up, and that seems to set me apart.

**GS:** Do you focus on certain types of merchants?

**MD:** My background has always been e-commerce-based.

When I worked for HMS they had me doing phone sales, and I would do a few retail sales here and there, but it was mainly nationwide e-commerce sales. When I went out on my own I pretty much continued with e-commerce sales, along with some retail.

About six months ago I did a bunch of Yellow Pages ads just to test the waters. I had never tried it ... and that certainly is drumming up more retail and wireless business. I do, though, prefer the e-commerce.

GS: Why?

**MD:** It's being on the techie side of the business, and I consider myself

to be a fairly technical person. I like working with the other technical people: the Web designers, graphic artists and so forth that have the clients. Those people are great referral sources.

With technology and the Internet, I feel that there is a vast opportunity and a lot of untapped businesses on the Web.



#### AgenTalk

" ...l am very proud of my progress. I have had my ups and downs and taken some steps back in order to move forward, but that makes me who I am today. I've learned from my mistakes, or wrong turns as I like to call them. I am proud to say that I have stuck with the industry and never given up."

- Melonie Dickey

**GS:** How do you feel about cold calling?

MD: Occasionally I will fit in cold calling in between appointments. If I see a new shopping complex, I certainly will go in and talk with the merchants ... they've already received 20 promos in the mail, and everybody's ads with lower and lower rates ... but I'll go in and let them know that I am here to help them along the way.

I'm not here to steer them 100% towards me, although I am there in hopes of earning their business, but I would like to do that by showing them how I differ from the other companies. I have been doing more cold calling over the past six months, and it has been pretty successful.

**GS:** How has the business changed since you started?

**MD:** Technology has changed tremendously in regards to the retail equipment. I'm jumping on board with the new contactless readers. I find them just so intriguing ... it almost seems we're in a surreal world now, like what we used to see in cartoons, the extreme future, is now happening. I look forward to being a part of the growth and certainly all the changes in technology.

**GS:** What are your requirements for choosing a processor?

MD: Customer service is key. Give the customer service department a call and see how well and how quickly they answer the phone. It is also good to have financial flexibility as an agent; not everybody gives you that. I personally

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#### AgenTalk

strive to be honest and up front, so I look at the merchant applications to find the ones that don't hide the fees.

**GS:** How do you feel about the honesty at the merchant level?

**MD:** It is not as common as I would hope, for the merchants' sake and for mine, when I come across a merchant who is under false pretense. It seems the lack of knowledge or education on the MLS level results in a lot of misled, confused and often times very upset merchants.

**GS:** How do you feel about security?

MD: I recently attended the [Western States Acquirers' Association] WSAA and learned a wealth of information on security and PCI compliance. [I] really feel that there needs to be more of this readily available on the MLS level, as we are the ones working directly with the merchant in the beginning, and it is important that this information is passed on to the merchants.

**GS:** How do you explain interchange rates to potential clients?

MD: These are the fees that are charged by the issuing

banks and ultimately passed on to the merchant, which becomes the cost of doing business and accepting credit cards. Otherwise, it would mean losing business, and no one wants that.

**GS:** Describe a learning experience.

**MD:** Over the past few years working with different ISOs and processors, I've taken several steps back. I lost over \$2,000 a month in residuals. That's huge when you are first starting out as an agent.

To lose that portfolio, that was a valuable learning experience, one of the best things that could have happened to me because I learned not to put all of your eggs in one basket. I learned that to work with at least a couple of different processors is not necessarily a bad idea. It's important to find a processor that is backed by a bank.

I would say that is number one, almost on top of customer service. The two certainly go hand in hand.

**GS:** How important are the regional and national tradeshows?

**MD:** I just attended my very first tradeshow (the WSAA)



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#### AgenTalk

since I have been out on my own. I felt so great after that, so motivated, I feel that it is certainly advantageous to get yourself out there, network with other people, meet the people that you are dealing with in the industry, learn about the latest and greatest technologies, compliance standards and value-added services.

**GS:** How do you stay informed on what's going on in the industry?

MD: There are a lot of reading [materials] and all the message boards that you can go on. There are plenty of sources, and it's simply a matter of putting aside the time for yourself to ... read the magazines and get on the forums and do the conference calls and training calls with the processors or the equipment manufacturers.

**GS:** What kind of resource has The Green Sheet been for you?

**MD:** A wealth of information.

**GS:** Describe a typical day in your life.

**MD:** Sell, sell, sell ... and customer service.

**GS:** Are you satisfied with your progress so far?

MD: Yes, I am very proud of my progress. I have had my ups and downs and taken some steps back in order to move forward, but that makes me who I am today. I've learned from my mistakes, or wrong turns as I like to call them. I am proud to say that I have stuck with the industry and never given up.

**GS:** Would you have done anything differently?

**MD:** I wouldn't go back and do anything differently, as that is how I have learned so much and gotten

to where I am, but I would be more cautious of who I choose to do business with. Not everyone has my best interest in mind.

**GS:** What are the benefits of working as an independent agent?

**MD:** One is the flexibility in pricing structures and working with different processors. Two: Building my residual portfolio. I do find that I put in more hours working for myself, but I wouldn't change a thing.

I have more time to travel, and I can even work where my travels take me. It took me three years to get where I am today, but that only makes me proud of my accomplishments and choices as an independent agent.

**GS:** Any advice for newcomers?

**MD:** The best thing that you can do is to educate yourself. No one else is going to do it for you.

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**Feature** 

## Compliance With New PLUS Rules Requires Long-term Investment, Planning

By Tracy Kitten, Editor

ATMmarketplace.com

This story was originally published on ATMmarketplace.com, Nov. 14, 2005; reprinted with permission. © 2005 NetWorld Alliance LLC. All rights reserved.

or more than a year, Visa U.S.A. has been spreading the word about revisions to PLUS network rules concerning ATM operators. So when the Nov. 1, 2005, deadline for all new merchant ATM agreements came and went, no ISO or financial institution should have been caught off guard.

"When ATMs first started, banks touted ATMs as being branches, and now you think about a merchant who could be a criminal operating his own branch. It's a scary thought."

- Marilyn Kilcrease Merchant Underwriting LLC In short, the new rules require ISOs and sponsoring FIs to know a lot more than they did in the past about merchants operating ATMs on the PLUS network, and have the documentation to prove it, if the merchant buys the ATM.

As of November 2006, ISOs and FIs must have that same

information about all existing ATM owners. That means, regardless of how long ago an ISO sold an ATM to a merchant, the ISO is responsible for maintaining up-to-date files about the merchant.

The rule also stipulates that FIs ensure merchants don't have any "significant derogatory," namely criminal, information about them floating around before they're hooked up to the PLUS network. Simply put, Visa wants to know that any merchant using its network is, well, legit.

#### **An Evolving Problem**

According to a Visa document obtained by ATMmarketplace, when ISOs came on the scene in the mid to late 1990s, the deployment of "nonmember branded" ATMs exploded, resulting "in a rapid increase in the number of privately owned ATMs operating in the U.S. region."

That growth, the document adds, has increased the risk of PIN security breaches, because some ISOs and sponsoring FIs "fail to conduct adequate due-diligence reviews or fail to maintain business agreements with entities they connect to the PLUS system." Alternatively, the new requirements are expected to enhance "member control" and "mitigate risk."

Most in the industry agree Visa is moving in the right direction. Some, like Marilyn Kilcrease, founder of Simi Valley, Calif.-based Merchant Underwriting LLC, are even scratching their heads, wondering what took the networks so long.

"Everybody knew this was coming after 9/11," Kilcrease said. "The Patriot Act was passed two years ago, and that's really why all of this is happening."

Merchant Underwriting is an ISO-centric company founded two years ago to help independents comply with Visa's request for more thorough and up-to-date merchant agreements. The company has contracts with 80 ISOs, whose portfolios range from small to large.

In Kilcrease's opinion, "Visa was very prudent in doing this." She estimates between \$20 billion and \$40 billion travels across EFT networks annually from ATM transactions originated at merchant-owned locations.

At many of those merchant locations, no one monitors due diligence, Kilcrease added. "When ATMs first started, banks touted ATMs as being branches, and now you think about a merchant who could be a criminal operating his own branch. It's a scary thought."

#### What's Ahead?

Although a bit more detailed, ensuring all new deals inked with ATM operators are up to par is the easy part.

Going back through the archives, if relevant documentation even exists, and bringing all existing agreements up to new-standard specifications by next November is a daunting task.

Kilcrease said most ISOs will be busy the next 11 months. "Think about going back to every sale that you've ever made. It's going to be very, very hard."

"Very hard," and expensive, said Mike Keller, General Counsel for Houston-based Cardtronics LP. With a network of 25,000 ATMs in the United States, Keller estimates Cardtronics will invest \$120,000 next year to comply with the revised agreement rules.

"We'll have a full-time person dedicated to doing this," Keller said. "I think we'll spend, not counting background checks, \$70,000 easily. And then with the background checks at 10 bucks a pop, and the 15,000 mer-

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chants we have, we're at \$150,000."

For Cardtronics, which has four sponsoring FIs, developing a uniform approach is crucial, Keller said.

"We want to make sure that we have the same kind of agreement, regardless of the sponsoring financial institution, so that it's uniform for all of the merchants we work with," he said.

"There shouldn't be a lot of variation. Besides, sometimes you may have a machine move from one sponsoring bank to another, and you want make sure that you have something uniform," so that it's all transferable.

Working out all of those details with the sponsoring banks and the merchants takes time. In fact, some merchants don't understand the need for a new agreement, nor do they understand why ISOs need more background information. So getting the word out to merchants has to be handled appropriately.

"We're going to be developing an approach, and when we go out and touch a merchant, we want to get this information while we're there," Keller said.

"Hopefully, over the next six weeks or so, we'll have that plan in place, and we hope to begin implementing it at the beginning of the year."

But Jeff Munford, a Florida-based distributor for Willoughby, Ohio-based ATM manufacturer and processor Western Reserve Group Inc., said most merchants appreciate the checks, once they understand the rules.

"Most c-store operators have been really cooperative," he said. "I tell them, 'We need this information to protect ourselves, you and your customers.'

"And they understand that, because c-store operators want to be sure that they are providing their customers with secure transactions.

"The average c-store has 100 customers that use the ATM regularly, and you don't want anything to happen to those customers, whether you are the c-store that owns your own machine or whether you have someone else place an ATM in your store."

Link to original: www.atmmarketplace.com/news\_story\_ 24511.htm

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View

# How Important Are the BIN and ICA to ISOs?

By Ken Musante

Humboldt Merchant Services LP

rom time to time, at the beginning of a negotiation with a semi-experienced sales organization, I hear "I want my own BIN and ICA" or "I need merchant portability." Rarely, however, are either of these statements fully thought through.

Portability without a Bank Identification Number (BIN) and Interbank Card Association (ICA) control is a misnomer. Moving a large number of merchants individually leads to merchant attrition, or it forces the acquirer to grant pricing concessions either to the merchants or to the next acquirer accepting the merchants. Individually, merchants are not portable; making them so inevitably decreases a portfolio's value.

BIN and ICA control will allow for mass movement of merchants if the ISO/acquirer contract is structured correctly. Doing this requires careful planning. As an ISO, when considering BIN and ICA portability, the first

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the details, but controlling only the BIN or only the ICA is similar to moving only the Visa processing and not MasterCard's. Obviously, this is of little value.

Next, only a financial institution and principal member can own a BIN/ICA. Asking for BIN/ICA ownership at the agreement's termination is not plausible. Likewise, receiving your own BIN/ICA without reference to its transferability is worthless.

Should you truly wish to control a BIN/ICA, at the end of a contract you should:

- 1. Require the acquirer to place your merchants in a unique BIN/ICA.
- 2. Require the acquirer to transfer the BIN/ICA to a fellow acquirer upon the termination of your agreement.
- 3. State that the termination notice should be given six months in advance.

Even with the above items, unless your merchant base, merchant agreements, business practices and, most important, third-party service providers are all transferable to another acquirer, your BIN/ICA portability issue is moot.

For example, if you use a little known processor or a proprietary Internet payment gateway that only a small number of acquirers support, the chances of finding a willing acquirer to which to transfer your BIN/ICA is slim. The same issue exists if your business practices are unique or customized for a specific acquirer.

What value is there in paying for the right to transfer a BIN/ICA if ultimately it is impractical to effect that transfer? Further, I know of many ISOs that have their own BIN/ICA but without the ability to transfer it. While these ISOs can boast they have "their own" BIN/ICA, it is no more transferable than the Brooklyn Bridge.

Ultimately, the reason folks want their own BIN/ICA and its control is so that they can make their asset more liquid and hence of greater value. Unfortunately, some do not fully contemplate the entire process and end up unnecessarily paying a premium.

Instead of paying for BIN/ICA ownership, sales professionals selling less than 300 merchants per month could and should work to ensure that their residuals are paid in perpetuity and that they are transferable. Doing so is many times easier and ultimately provides for the same liquidity.

Ken Musante is President of Humboldt Merchant Services. E-mail him at kmusante@hbms.com





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# **E-Time System Inc.**

#### MLS contact:

Bruce Quentin Burke, Director of Sales and Marketing

Phone: 866-387-7672 Fax: 215-659-8767

E-mail: bruceb@etimesystem.com

#### **Company address:**

37 York Road Willow Grove, PA 19090 Phone: 866-387-7672 Fax: 215-659-8767

Web site: www.etimesystem.com

#### MLS benefits:

- Collect upfront money for installations and account applications
- Earn recurring revenue from volume that retail locations produce
- Sell a variety of equipment and services for installation of ETS services
- Deployment options that fit every business model

# More for Merchants: Prepaid and Bill Payment

"Bill pay and the variety of products we offer add a lot of adhesion to the retailer. There are only a handful of companies in the U.S that accept bill payments. This is something different than what everybody else has."

> - Bruce Burke, Director of Sales and Marketing E-Time System Inc.

erchants are always looking for auxiliary products and services not only to generate more revenues and drive traffic to their stores, but also to bring that traffic back again. E-Time System Inc. has a solution that will help them do this. The company offers a network that enables retailers to sell hot items such as prepaid products and accept consumer bill payments.

Retailers may choose from a portfolio of prepaid products, such as wireless airtime, phone cards and debit cards. And E-Time processes for more than 2,400 billers nationwide. Bill payment categories include utilities, wireless providers, department stores, and credit card, cable, auto, and mortgage companies.

Any type of merchant can benefit from using the system, especially convenience and discount stores, wireless retailers, check cashing operations and international money remittances places.

## An Idea Improved

Gil Barzeski and Harvey Mindel founded E-Time in 1999. This was only six years ago, but the way in which prepaid products are distributed to retailers has changed significantly since then.

"The idea for the company grew out of a need to find a better way to inventory, deliver and provide reporting for PIN-based [prepaid] products," said Bruce Burke, E-Time's Director of Sales and Marketing.

The two partners had been distributing mobile phone handsets for OmniPoint (now T-Mobile). They made a deal with the company to distribute PINs for "recharge" minutes to retailers. At that time, these products were distributed on plastic cards. Consumers selected cards from a rack in the store and paid for them at the cash register.

"[Barzeski and Mindel] were essentially running around to all these different retailers ... taking 20 cards here, 50 cards there, etc., and it just didn't make sense from a logistics or financial standpoint ... It wasn't an effective solution," Burke said.

It didn't make much sense for merchants, either. Keeping activated plastic prepaid cards in stock requires paying for inventory up

front. (E-Time estimates that stocking all denominations of all the available wireless providers costs more than \$10,000.) Plus, product lines change frequently, and merchants are always at risk from employee theft, or "shrinkage."

With the help of Jonathan Clark, now E-Time's Chief Technology Officer, Barzeski began building a client/server application based on retailers' input and requirements. "Years later we're still building on it," Burke said. "It worked after four weeks; it's just developed more and more." E-Time now employs 22 people and boasts \$25 million in annual sales.

# **Sweet Suite Options**

The company's solution, ETS, is a full suite of six software applications that all connect to E-Time's servers (E-Time Back Office). The applications are deployed in a number of different ways, including on Windows-based computers (ETS Pro), Lipman NURIT POS terminals (ETS Terminal) or self-service kiosks (ETS Kiosk). Retailers also access the system over the Web (ETS Lite).

Merchants using ETS Pro, a client/server application, can accept bill payments, sell prepaid wireless airtime and prepaid phone and debit cards, and activate wireless handsets.

When retailers sell prepaid products, the ETS application connects to E-Time's servers (using a dial-up or high-speed Internet connection). They receive PINs on-demand, which eliminates the need to keep plastic inventory in the store. A thermal receipt or thermal card printer prints the PIN and other important information at the POS.

ETS offers retailers an unlimited inventory of prepaid products. These are essentially PINs required to activate the service and a serial number with instructions. The company buys directly from suppliers and "stocks" the information on its own servers.

ETS Pro includes robust reporting and administrative capabilities. Retailers sort data to view either canned or custom reports. They also may create different levels of security to restrict employee access at different levels.

Like ETS Pro, ETS Terminal and ETS Lite enable merchants to accept bill payments, sell prepaid products and activate new wireless handsets. However, with ETS Terminal, a software application is loaded on a NURIT POS terminal instead of on a personal computer; it connects to E-Time's server through a dial-up telephone line.

Why Lipman terminals? "We found that their operating system for the majority of their units was the same on







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almost every model number ... It offered more flexibility," Burke said. "They are also an Israel-based company. The owner of our company is from Israel. We got a lot of support from Israel in terms of price and flexibility."

With ETS Lite, E-Time's Web-based application, all merchants need is a high-speed Internet connection and a Web browser to connect to E-Time's server. Nearly any computer configuration, touch screen, laptop, desktop or thin client, will work.

# Making Bill Payment Profitable

To pay bills at a participating E-Time retailer, consumers provide the biller's account number, telephone number and the amount to be paid.

To process transactions, clerks enter the information into the ETS application, either on the computer or POS terminal or through the Web. Consumers receive a printed receipt with account name, transaction number and amount paid.

E-Time works with a number of bill aggregators. "We've integrated with MasterCard RPPS, which is their Remote Payment and Presentment Service," Burke said.

"Retailers can essentially collect bill payments for any bill the consumer walks in with that is on the MasterCard list."

The company will also accept bill payments for billers not on its list. "We will take the payment, but we have to charge them more because it's out of network," Burke said.

"We'll manually fulfill the bill ourselves. If we see enough of that type of bill coming through, it may justify programming an interface with that biller."

Merchants earn revenue by charging transaction fees for the service. "We're finding the average bill payment runs around \$103," Burke said. "If they're processing five bill payments a day over the course of a 350-day year, they are looking at a [significant amount of] additional cash flow coming through their door."

He said a lot of merchants using the system are small to mediumsized chains. "I'm finding that the individual retailer is more receptive to it than the big chains.

"A lot of people are coming to our systems because they are unsatisfied with others," he said.

## E-Time's Reseller Program

ISOs and merchant level salespeople (MLSs) selling E-Time's system ben-





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efit through opportunities to earn recurring revenue. They also can collect money up front for installations and account applications.

"MLSs may sell whatever equipment and services they need in order to get retailers connected to the ETS Network," Burke said.

E-Time's MLS compensation model is based on a combination of buy rates, commission, equipment sales and recurring residual income. "Our payment history is prompt, informative and straightforward," Burke said.

MLSs will also have access to their own Web portal where they can log in for real-time information on their accounts.

The company offers a 24/7/365 help desk for distributors, retailers and MLSs who encounter any problems. "Our approach is straightforward; we provide solutions not doubletalk," Burke said.

"Our technical staff has extensive training on all the common problems that retailers face.

"Our MLS sales staff is provided with comprehensive

information and unparalleled sales and customer service," he said. "We are here to provide answers and support to the MLS channel."

The company is currently expanding its ISO/MLS program and invites all interested individuals to call to secure their area. "We are offering great incentives for agents who want to catch and ride the ETS wave," Burke said.

"Selling merchant accounts is a viable business if there are a lot of new retailers springing up in the market where the ISO is working. I think that market has kind of gotten saturated. There's obviously a lot of competition in that space.

"Bill pay and the variety of products we offer add a lot of adhesion to the retailer. There are only a handful of companies in the U.S that accept bill payments.

"This is something different than what everybody else has. You're not competing against 'What's your rate on your merchant processing?'

"We give them the ability to set their own rates and their own profit," he said.





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# eCenturion LLC

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#### Company address:

18682 Beach Blvd., Suite 235 Huntington Beach, CA 92648 Phone: 866-477-7784 Fax: 801-303-6728 E-mail: info@eCenturion.com Web site: www.eCenturion.com

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# **Protecting All Involved**

y now you have most certainly read about the various cardholder data security requirements, such as the card Associations' Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard or Visa U.S.A.'s Cardholder Information Security Program (CISP).

We have learned, and some the hard way, that it is vital for merchants and processors to be in compliance with these requirements and to secure cardholder data. However, when it comes to liability, these rules protect the card Associations, not the ISOs, processors or merchants.

"The Associations, with CISP and PCI, have successfully created a liability barrier between themselves, merchant acquirers, ISOs and merchants," said Ray Ricks, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of eCenturion LLC.

"The rules have been clearly defined that in the event of a security breach they are blameless because the acquirer, ISO or merchant was acting outside the operating agreement. The liability will fall to the latter."

That is one reason that Ricks founded eCenturion, a security product and consulting company. ECenturion is a Managed Security Service Provider (MSSP) that offers businesses alternatives to the traditional network and Internet security methods that have failed to adequately protect information systems.

The company provides a security

system for managing the risks associated with processing and collecting protected and confidential information, without the need for the client's active involvement.

ECenturion provides security solutions and consulting services for payment gateways, ISOs and merchants. The company is based in Huntington Beach, Calif. with an operations center in Salt Lake City, Utah. In November 2005, it expanded into Asia.

# **Decades of Experience**

Ricks spent nearly two decades with Citibank's bankcard group. "I was the Chief Information Security Officer at bankcards before there was ever such a title," he said.

While at Citibank he was responsible for physical and logical security and data integrity.

He also directed the fraud investigations team and authored the first information security policy, which became a cornerstone of Citicorp's technology framework.

It's not only the recent media coverage or security breaches that have got Ricks involved in data security and protection; he has been involved in this arena for quite a while.

"Our core belief is there is only one way to protect businesses against vulnerabilities and attack," he said. "Effective security must be holistic. Defense systems must dynamically view the entire system's state of health 24/7.



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"The only meaningful response to an attack is a strong, instantaneous defense. Consequently, the only way to outpace constantly evolving vulnerabilities and costly attacks is through instant detection, alerting and engaging a premier defense system, triggering an effective and appropriate response."

# Do It Right the First Time

Ricks pointed out the confusion surrounding security solutions. "With the advent of the Internet, Internet connectivity to POS systems and the newly evolved security standards by the Associations, there is a convergence of security, privacy and payment processing at the merchant level," he said.

Such varied and continually evolving factors can lead to confusion and chaos when ISOs and merchants attempt to comply by the card Associations' rules while simultaneously protecting their business and running a successful company.

If business managers think that they cannot afford such a solution, Ricks urges them to rethink the total cost of ownership, which includes loss of reputation and strategic partner relationships and financial loss to litigation and penalties.

"They can do it the hard way and try to do it themselves and likely do it incorrectly, or they can spend less money and do it in a simple, elegant and effective way," he said.

ECenturion believes that the choice of a security solution is not only a technical decision but also a management decision. "If a breach occurs ... who do you want representing you and articulating the security measures taken to protect you? ECenturion with extensive security credentials or the software engineer in the corner operating as a security technician?" Ricks said.

# **Much More Than Compliance**

ECenturion provides compliance audits, security products and support should any legal or rule issues arise. "As a consulting company we can certify merchant or ISO compliance to CISP and PCI standards," Ricks said.

"But, more importantly, we have a product we developed to protect information systems at the 2002 Winter Olympics, now available to businesses." That product is the Sentry with Managed Security.

The Sentry is a plug and play hardware-based security appliance. Don't let the simplicity fool you. ECenturion recognizes that security needs are different for each business, and the solution must meet those needs to adequately protect that business.



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#### The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999 addresses the disclosure of nonpublic personal information by financial institutions. However, the Act defines financial institutions not only as banks and credit unions, but also as mortgage brokers, realtors, auto dealers and more that collect and process personal information from customers. The enforcement of this law is the responsibility of the Federal Trade Commission.

Source: eCenturion LLC

Therefore, the Sentry offers three standard configuration standards (open, controlled and restricted usage) and custom configuration. The company can custom-configure the product prior to shipping it to the merchant.

For those who believe they don't need such a solution because they have an existing firewall, Ricks said, "They are misinformed as to what a firewall does.

"It does nothing unless it is configured properly, securely and correctly to meet the business requirements. ECenturion provides to our clients a premier Defense in Depth system with multiple layers of protection to achieve security and privacy."

Some of the Sentry's features include a perimeter firewall to protect the internal network against external threats, an embedded firewall to protect against internal threats, and an intrusion detection and prevention system that blocks malicious network traffic or hacking attempts.

The Sentry also scans for viruses before they reach individual computers, scans for spyware before it reaches critical devices and stops SPAM.

The solution also performs network vulnerability scanning and reporting, a CISP and PCI requirement, as often as the user chooses.

It archives the scans, and the results remain available to use as evidence should it be needed. It also archives all network traffic for purposes of diagnostics and forensics.

"ECenturion's products and services meet or exceed the technical security requirements or safeguards of the CISP and PCI rules as well as GLBA [Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999].

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"With our extensive experience and credentials, we are able to articulate measures taken and defend our security solution to the Associations, and others, if necessary," Ricks said.

Similar to home PC virus scans, the Sentry must be updated regularly. That's why the product features a secure remote administration tool to allow updates to the appliance without additional intervention. Client networks are monitored 24/7, and updates occur during non-business hours.

"We refresh the device at least once a day ... we do all of this automatically," Ricks said. "There is no one that does it better than we do or as simply as we do. Until now, that level of expertise and technology was only available to those that could afford it. We are talking Fortune-100 companies."

ECenturion also offers help-desk support from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. PST.

# **Actively Recruiting ISOs**

While ISOs can certainly benefit from using eCenturion's products and services, they also can benefit by becoming a reseller. The company is focusing its growth on thou-

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sands of channel partners selling eCenturion products; it is actively recruiting ISOs now.

It pays commissions on the sale of the Sentry security appliance and the monthly service fee. "The income potential for those selling early in the managed security adoption cycle is almost limitless," Ricks said.

The Sentry could be a solution for ISOs and merchant level salespeople (MLSs) to present to both new and existing merchants. Practically any merchant could benefit.

"They [merchants] are not going to benefit if they only have a POS terminal," Ricks said. "But if they collect, store or process data through a computer network then they definitely have to be protected."

Currently eCenturion is offering a special deal. For those who purchase an eCenturion product by Jan. 31, 2006, the company will provide them with a complimentary network vulnerability review. The company will collect data for analysis and forensics and provide the client with a report.

Sentry with Managed Security also helps healthcare providers become and remain compliant with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, or HIPPA. If you are an MLS or ISO serving the healthcare industry this is an opportunity worth pursuing.

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"The card Associations have built a wall between themselves and the merchant," Ricks said. "If there is evidence that the rules were not followed, they will leave the merchant hanging.

In today's carnivorous litigation environment you need a system that is defendable by experts who rank in the top percentile of subject matter experts.

"A business manager must implement the best security solution available. Failure to do so in today's environment could be a 'business ending' decision. The eCenturion solution is the best insurance a business can have," he said.



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# **BookReview**

# Mastering Change ... Surfer Style

Carpe aqualis (car' pay ah' kwa lis)

Taking full advantage of skills, talents, abilities and attitudes to convert challenges into opportunities and victories.

Source: Frank F. Lunn

eeling overwhelmed by how quickly everything in life, from technology to communications and business, is changing? There is a simple solution: Learn to surf.

This is the advice of author Frank F. Lunn in his new motivational book titled "Carpe Aqualis! 7 Essential Surfing Skills to Revolutionize Your Business and Personal Life." Lunn is from Indiana, so his surfing expertise comes into question. Fortunately for readers, he uses surfing as a metaphor.

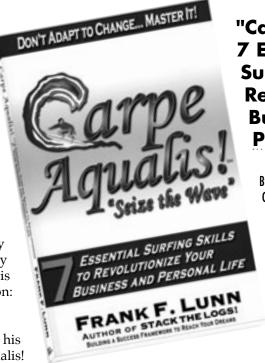
Change, he says, whether in business or in our personal life, is like the ocean's waves: constant and unpredictable. There are really only two types of waves, challenges and opportunities; these will either wipe you out or take you for the ride of a lifetime.

It's up to you to "Carpe Aqualis," and seize the wave.

In "Carpe Aqualis!" he coins the term Terro-Phoria. This is an emotion that lies somewhere between terror and euphoria, much like what people feel riding roller coasters or surfing big waves. The phrase describes opportunities so big that they simultaneously scare us and excite us.

Even if Lunn is only an amateur surfer (his bio states he surfs for fun in Hawaii), he knows a thing or two about overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities. He has spearheaded a number of business ventures, including Kahuna Business Group, an ATM cooperative he founded in 1995.

Kahuna Empowerment Inc., a division of Kahuna Business Group, is a publisher of motivational products to help raise money and awareness for St. Jude



"Carpe Aqualis!
7 Essential
Surfing Skills to
Revolutionize Your
Business and
Personal Life"

By Frank F. Lunn
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#### **BookReview**

Children's Research Hospital. (In 2002, his son Frankie was diagnosed with leukemia.) He is also the author of "Stack the Logs! Building A Success Framework To Reach Your Dreams" (2004).

In "Carpe Aqualis!" following a preface and introduction titled "Chapter 0," Lunn lays out a strategy for pursuing and achieving success. Each chapter is tied to the theme of surfing, and includes several epigraphs, called Surf-Titude.

Readers are surfers and surfing instructors and have entrepreneurial surfer organizations. They make surfer affirmations in the hope of achieving surf-cess.

He offers the S.U.R.F. Strategy:

- Survey the situation
- Understand your options
- Respond based on your goals
- Forward focus in action and attitude

He also provides seven essential "surfing skills" described in detail in subsequent chapters. Some of these include:

- Your competition is not the other surfers; it's only you.
- Great surfers strengthen others.
- Surf the waves that come, but be prepared for the big one.
- Surf your passion and your strengths.

His insight on competition, preparation, team building and learning from mistakes is familiar but invaluable. For example, in Chapter 10, "Go Big or Go Home! To Be Great You Have to Be Willing to Wipe Out," he writes:

Skill development happens through practice, trial and error ... when you begin you will fail more than you succeed. [It] will start off ugly. Over time your skill will grow and your results will improve. ... Each failure pays off in experience while sowing future seeds of opportunities.

For those who have not read his "Stack the Logs," in Chapter 11, Lunn provides a refresher on his S.T.A.C.K strategy.

The book contains many rousing points, and if you don't mind the surf-theme, which becomes a little much at times, it's a fun and an inspiring read.

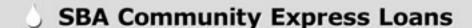


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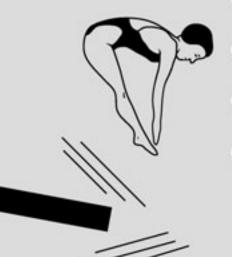


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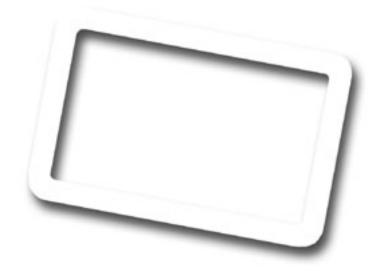
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#### PayPal From Page 1

ket, which is PayPal's main source of business, currently, represents only 20% of e-commerce payments, which some analysts point to as PayPal's biggest weakness.

"PayPal's acquisition of VeriSign's payment gateway, and the 100,000 merchants it services, will strengthen PayPal's market presence," Litan said. "PayPal's innovative uses of payment funding systems will likely be welcomed by small and midsize businesses that want less-expensive alternatives to credit card payments, and eventually by even the largest online merchants.

"The recent PayPal offering that allows merchants to accept both credit cards and lower-cost PayPal payments will likely prove attractive to small and medium-sized businesses and will clearly benefit merchants already using VeriSign services," she said.

# First PayPal, Now Google

Some have surmised that the VeriSign deal may also be a preemptive strike against Google's announced but not yet released Google Wallet service (expected to be released in early 2006). Although details of Wallet have not yet been revealed, it is rumored that Wallet will, initially at least, be limited to individual-business transactions (unlike PayPal, which allows individual-individual transactions).

But like PayPal, it is believed that Wallet will be a stored value account. Google executives have said the Wallet service will not be a direct competitor to PayPal, but Wallet could very well limit PayPal's expansion beyond eBay and threaten PayPal's dominance in the online payments market.

"Google Wallet could significantly disrupt the market landscape," Schatt said. "Ultimately, scale and volume will determine the victors in this market, and Google's ubiquitous nature could serve it well."

PayPal wasn't the first to try to create digital cash, but earlier attempts were too sweeping; their creators either envisioned a traditional bank-based system that accepted digital cash just like real cash, or relied on widespread and rapid adoption of the concept by consumers. Competitors have come and gone, while PayPal rocketed to success in the person-to-small-business pay-

ments universe by being more like a credit card payment system: limiting transactions to those who have joined the PayPal network.

Although PayPal's ambition now appears to be the global standard for Internet payments, in its early days, its creators, Peter Thiel, a former hedge fund manager and Max Levchin a 23-year-old pro-





## CoverStory

and prid.

grammer at the time, were more narrowly focused and more pragmatic.

Their concept was to provide digital payments, not digital cash, and to make the solution as easy as possible for individuals to use. They initially targeted person-to-person payments. Cash would be drawn from checking accounts or credit cards, and the individuals' accounts could be settled in two ways, through e-mail and infrared rays passed between Palm Pilots.

The Palm Pilot idea didn't pan out, but the online payments took off, overwhelming the start-up with 20,000 new members per day before it was even a year old, a pace it maintained until eBay purchased it in October 2002, soon after eBay's IPO.

# A New Target Market?

Until recently, most of PayPal's transactions occurred between individuals or individuals and merchants whose volume was so small that they couldn't qualify for a merchant account anyway, but recently PayPal has alarmed ISOs by going after small to medium-sized businesses. PayPal has virtually saturated eBay's auction sales and is now believed to be targeting non-eBay businesses with between \$250,000 and \$5 million a year in transactions to

fuel its next growth spurt. "In the past year we've started to really emphasize our merchant services business," Bettencourt said. "SMBs [small and medium-sized businesses] are a market that PayPal is starting to target.

"We're reaching out to the merchants outside of eBay, typically those that are a little larger, more sophisticated, that want to seamlessly integrate payment options into their online operations."

A PayPal press release announcing the VeriSign deal stated, "With the acquisition of VeriSign's payment gateway, which processed more than \$40 billion in total payment volume in 2004, PayPal plans to accelerate its merchant services business by expanding its customer base to tens of thousands of new small and medium-sized business customers online."

"PayPal could eventually replace credit/debit cards as the dominant online payment mechanism, if it can maintain low merchant rates while increasing customer service, responsiveness and chargeback ease so that its policies and practices are as consumer-friendly as are the card companies," Litan said. "The card companies will need to fight back with rate decreases to hold their e-commerce market share."



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MasterCard International-owned TowerGroup, an industry research firm, said that large nonbank providers of payment processing services, such as PayPal, are and will continue to be, a disruptive force in the payments industry.

"Less encumbered by legacy technologies and especially by regulation, nonbanks have deconstructed the payments value chain, cherry-picking opportunities in high-return areas and experimenting with new business models," said Elizabeth Robertson, a TowerGroup Senior Analyst.

"They are increasingly challenging the position that banks have typically held in providing these services," Robertson said. "Nonbank payment mega-vendors help expand the market and provide banks with payment services and solutions, but they can also pose a competitive threat to banks' payments markets and revenues because they are less comprehensively regulated than are banks."

# **Success Brings Competition**

Interestingly, PayPal's appearance of success could lead to its eventual demise. Other nonbank payment vendors are and will continue to enter the space (see "Back to the Future With Cash Payment Options," The Green Sheet,

July 25, 2005, issue 05:07:02). Competitors cutting into PayPal's profits could hurt eBay's high-volume but low margin division, and could erode the market enough to give traditional credit card issuers the entry they need.

Consumers are looking for ease of use, security, payment options to use in most or all Web commerce sites, and name recognition. These are the factors that give Google and PayPal an edge over other nonbank vendors. But, if the market proliferates to the point of confusion, consumers may abandon them for a branded online credit card alternative that seems more ubiquitous.

"Credit card companies could enter the micropayments market simply by lowering merchant transaction fees," Litan said. "But these companies don't have PayPal's advantage of funding payments from PayPal stored accounts. PayPal can beat credit card pricing because it blends credit card, bank account transfer and stored PayPal account value funding on the payer side, lowering PayPal's overall cost of funding any payment.

"PayPal encourages repeat payer customers to keep money in their PayPal accounts (the company's lowestcost funding method), and to use credit cards (the most expensive funding option) as a last-option funding meth-



CoverStory

od," she said. "A change in regulatory climate toward nonbanks could also alter some of these dynamics," Robertson said.

# **Relationships Over Price**

In order to compete with PayPal, Litan said vendors should offer value beyond payment processing. She also suggested that vendors consider reselling PayPal rather than attempting to compete in the online payments market with outdated payment methods. But ISOs and merchant level salespeople (MLSs) are not sanguine about that strategy.

Analysts speculate that Google Wallet will bypass the resellers completely, only offering accounts direct to merchants. PayPal, too, offers little in the way of incentives for ISOs. "We typically don't have what you'd call an ISO channel," Bettencourt said.

"There are some shopping cart companies that package PayPal merchant accounts into their shopping carts, but we don't have an ISO agreement per se."

Lightbridge Inc.'s Authorize.Net Corp., a provider of Internet protocol-based payment gateway services, said 63% of its resellers are concerned about PayPal adversely affecting business and cutting into their merchant banking revenue stream.

"Authorize.Net is actively encouraging all ISOs to educate their merchants on the benefits of retaining a full merchant account," said Roy Banks, Authorize.Net President.

"While those unfamiliar with PayPal's recent moves may still consider it to be a niche payment method for eBay auctions, the reality is that PayPal is now a considerable threat to the ISO's channel, as any merchant with a business or a premier PayPal account also has the ability to accept credit card payments, which are then routed through PayPal.

"Based upon this new model, we believe that PayPal's ultimate strategy is to displace the traditional merchant account," he said. "It is for this reason that we believe it is critical for ISOs to proactively reach out to their merchants so as to avoid having them poached by PayPal."

How will PayPal, and its nonbank competitors, affect the financial services industry? If traditional credit card issuers head off PayPal in this volatile terrain by offering merchants both affordable micropayments and robust, and secure, online initiatives, ISOs and MLSs may not have much to worry about.

But for now, the magic eight ball says: "Reply hazy, try again."

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#### News

#### **Wal-Mart Moves Further Into Financial Services**

On Oct. 31, 2005 Wal-Mart filed an

application with the Massachusetts

Division of Banks for in-store check

for insurance purposes.

cashing windows to handle payroll and

government checks, money-orders and

espite a rash of recent criticism from the financial services industry, Wal-Mart Stores Inc. continues to forge ahead. Much to the chagrin of Massachusetts bankers, the retailing giant recently applied to institute check-cashing operations at all of its 44 stores in that state.

On Oct. 31, 2005 Wal-Mart filed an application with the Massachusetts Division of Banks for in-store check cashing windows to handle payroll and government checks, money-orders and for insurance purposes. The retailer has no current plans for personal check services according to Wal-Mart spokesman Marty Heires.

Bruce Spitzer, spokesman for the Massachusetts Bankers Association, called this "a bad turn of events." He said the issue is not Wal-Mart's cashing checks, but rather it is the first time Wal-Mart has asked "for banking privileges in this state, and we are wor-

ried that it could set a dangerous precedent for further banking powers."

Wal-Mart currently has check cashing operations in stores located in 45 of 50 U.S. states, according to Heires. Massachusetts would be the 46th. The company also has filed applications in Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Steve Wolf, Treasurer of Pay-O-Matic, a Long Island, N.Y.-based check cashing service, and former President of the National Check Cashers Association, said that Wal-Mart's activity on the check cashing front is not a new development in check cashing services, nor will it cause major disturbances.

"What Wal-Mart is doing is the continuation of a trend, not a brand new concept," Wolf said. "Supermarkets have been doing this for years." He noted that supermarkets generally do not charge for check cashing, and the fact that Wal-Mart does, adds "a new wrinkle."

Heires said Wal-Mart has offered payroll and government check cashing since 2003. "Our maximum fee is \$3. That is 25 to 50% lower than our competitors," he said.

Traditional check cashing stores offer services above and

beyond check cashing such as bill payment, money orders and prepaid services.

"Check cashing is a service of convenience," Wolf said. "Wal-Mart will take market share, and in some cases could be the 600-pound gorilla, but ultimately people will still use the location that is most convenient."

#### Wal-Mart and the ILC Applications

In the financial services world, Wal-Mart made a much bigger splash in July by filing applications with the Utah Department of Financial Institutions and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) to own and operate

an industrial loan company, or ILC (see "Wal-Mart's Tenacity: Attempt Number Four at Banking," The Green Sheet, Aug. 22, 2005, issue 05:08:02).

ILCs are FDIC-insured but not subject to Federal Reserve oversight. ILCs are generally

created to issue and/or process payment cards. Wal-Mart's control of one will allow it to become its own acquirer and save millions of dollars in transaction processing.

As is the case with many of Wal-Mart's actions, controversy follows. Since Wal-Mart's filing of the ILC applications, many have criticized the company for trying to bring its retail practices into the financial industry by consolidating services and pushing out the competition.

The FDIC, which will decide whether to insure a Wal-Mart bank, put the issue up for public discussion. From the end of July to mid-November, it received more than 1,500 comment letters.

Community bankers emerged en masse to plead against the prospect of a Wal-Mart-owned bank. They said the retailer's corporate philosophy does not coincide with a limited-use financial institution; it will eventually attempt to expand into full-service consumer banking to the detriment of local branches. (ILCs can operate just like banks: taking deposits, making loans, etc.)

In its ILC applications with the FDIC and the state of Utah, Wal-Mart maintains that it has no intention beyond transaction processing. The company cites the 1,100-plus community branches operating in Wal-Mart stores around the country as evidence.

## 10 Years Ago in The Green Sheet ...

December 11, 1995

Issue 95:12:01

#### The Green Sheet

News and Advisory Service for ISOs in the Financial Services Industry

#### Holiday Sales, What's Up?

Guarantee residual income

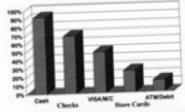
You have probably already heard or read some of the predictions and concerns over the 1995 Christman season, and if you have a "nice" Bankcard or Check tising markdowns of as much as 50% on some fall clothes and other merchanding.

Bankcard numbers, however, seem to be fine, even if retailers may have to discount more deeply than "Christmas" Past". Visa, as an example reported that the November 24th and 25th sales. period, since over the last few years they have waited for big discounts and promotions during that final week. Last year, five of the top ten shopping days were in the last week before Christmas. With an extra day and a full weekend of shopping right before Christmas compared to last year, we expect a surge at the end that could boost everall same-store sales in the 3 to 5 % range.

Finally, it appears from the recort USA Today survey, as well as the American Express Retail Index, consumers plan to use checks during Christmas 1995, nearly as often as Major Credit Cards and Store charge cards, combined, and second only to cash purchases.

#### **Holiday Payments**

Percentage of consumers surveyed by USA Today, who expect to pay for holding purchases with:



Letter to the Editor The E-Myth

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Inside This

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Caps on

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BSA Bulletin Board

Fed. Says

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the Positive 5 Close-Ended

Questions 5 Get

Organized for 1996 6 Resource buse, you may already have become concerned about what your December 1995 and January 1996 rebutes may look like.

This year, Macy's and other jittery retailers began cutting prices early in November in response to dismal October sales, when retailers averaged the lowest gain from the previous mooth since June 1991.

Analysts report that the process continued on Friday, November 17, 1995, when stores from Bloomingdale's to Nordstrom began adver-

· .....

volume in 1995 was up in all categories against the same two days in 1994.

Overall retail merchants are up 17.9%, with Mail and Phone Order up the most at 25.0%, Electronic up 21.9%, Discount Stores up 14.2% and Department Stores up 14.2% and Department Stores up only 10.5%, perhaps accounting for the discounting actions of Macy's, Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom in Newsumber.

The weak season starting numbers may indicate that consumers are focused on the end of the shopping

#### Fed. Says Return Check Fees Are Up

We are all aware by now that the trend over the last two years has been for banks to continue to increase the fees charged to both consumers and retail depositors for bank return charges, called DIR's (Deposit Item Return-Fees).

With a new November 1995 report, the banking industry had hoped for a fresh round of ammunition in its war of words over the

- The Green Sheet reported on a "USA Today" survey that showed consumers planned to use checks nearly as often for holiday purchases as major credit cards and "store charge cards" combined. Checks were second only to cash purchases.
- The precursor to Electronic Transactions Association, the Bankcard Service Association (BSA) rolled out a new bulletin board service. The Bulletin Board offered newsletter access, messaging between BSA members, and an online certification testing capability.
- A Federal Reserve study showed that in the two years prior, bank fees for bad checks were the only checking fees to increase.
- In related news, the debate over fee caps began to intensify: How much could banks charge customers for bounced checks?
- A revised edition of Michael Gerber's underground bestseller "The E-Myth," was released. The book discusses all the steps needed to start one's own business.



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## Psychological Selling: Motivating the MLS, Part II

By Amy B. Garvey

National Association of Payment Professionals (NAOPP)

am writing this series on motivation because the subject fascinates me. I also find that it inevitably becomes a topic of conversation when I'm around other industry veterans: How is it that we all manage to stay motivated?

Our product suites seem to change almost daily, it's hard to get support when it's needed, and we hear more No's and have more doors slammed in our faces than do sales reps in other industries. For example, compare merchant

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level salespeople (MLSs) to restaurant food vendors; food vendors are salespeople, too, but rarely are they told, No, we don't need ketchup this week.

Most sales revolve around consumable products. Although terminals continue to improve because of technological advances, we don't necessarily have a product that our customers will quickly run out of. So how do we manage to go out there and make the sale every day?

In his book, "The Human Side of Enterprise," Douglas McGregor noted that traditional management methods, which he called Theory X, might not be the only way to motivate people. He proposed and developed a different approach, Theory Y, which he suggested could achieve the same, if not greater results.

Theory X, or the traditional view of direction and control, assumes that the average person inherently dislikes work and will avoid it when he can. He must be coerced, controlled or threatened to put forth effort to better the company.

The theory also assumes that most people act based on a need for security rather than out of enthusiasm for their jobs. This leads to negligible personal responsibility in work. It doesn't leave much room for personal insight or exploration, and it has traditionally dominated the bankcard industry.

Although most folks involved in merchant services are steering away from the old school mentality of sales offices, there are still a few diehards out there who hire 20 new reps a week, educate them as little as possible and



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McGregor's Theory Y is behind most modern-day organizational approaches to motivation. It seems much more applicable to MLSs whom I've encountered over the past five years.

The theory assumes that most people have an innate capacity for ingenuity, creativity and insight. It argues that the physical effort involved in work is the same as the effort involved in play or rest; it is the same as the effort required for any normal human activity.

McGregor states that the average person doesn't inherently dislike work, and he is capable of self direction and control, so these factors don't necessarily need to come from outside forces.

He further asserts that most individuals do not simply accept responsibility; rather, they seek it out. And despite this, most employees' intellectual potential remains untapped.

McGregor's final idea for this theory is that the level of our dedication to a particular task is inextricably connected to the rewards we gain upon its completion.

I agree with this concept. If we understand that privileges come as a result of fulfilling our duties, then we tend to seek out more responsibility (in work and in life), thereby permitting access to greater rewards.

Questions arise, however, when I think about the immediacy of the reward and value perceived by the recipients. If the privilege or reward is granted right away and is something held dear, the tendency to seek out greater responsibility is certain to increase, right?

What about delayed gratification? In the last "Street Smarts" column ("Psychological Selling: Motivating the MLS," The Green Sheet, Nov. 28, 2005, issue 05:11:02), I used as an example the goal of earning \$10,000 per month in residuals after having worked in merchant services for 10 years. While this is certainly a realistic and attainable goal, it does little to keep you as an MLS revved up from day to day, especially in the first few years.

Goal-driven motivation is a great model to use if you are in a place of growth. The need for growth, according to Abraham Maslow, an expert in motivational hierarchies, is the need for self-actualization: the need to belong to a group, be accepted, achieve, and gain approval and recognition.





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While these are very real in most of us, a whole different set of needs are much more base-level. These must be met before we can move on to, and stay in, a place of self-esteem.

Deficiency needs, as Maslow called them, are more moti-

vating because we simply cannot live without them. These are the basic necessities: food, water, shelter, clothing, safety, security and comfort.

The problem with being an MLS and working toward a self-actualizing goal is that we often are stuck in a quagmire of deficiency

needs. Wondering whether we will have enough money to pay our rent does not put us at the level of esteembased motivation.

Our primary motivating factors are feeding our family, keeping a roof over our head and securing a future, however immediate that may be.

How do we move toward the self-actualization stage of

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our motivational climb, while still caring for our basic physical needs? Do we constantly migrate from one category to another depending on our current financial state, or do we live somewhere in between?

It is suggested that we should only use hierarchies and other similar theories as guideposts. Figure out in which

The problem with being an MLS and working toward a self-actualizing goal is that we often are stuck in a quagmire of deficiency needs. Wondering whether we will have enough money to pay our rent does not put us at the level of esteem-based motivation.

group of needs you spend the most time, and see if there are ways for you to use the other categories to further your journey toward self-actualization.

For example, a Buddhist monk living in a monastery is focused on self-actuality and transcendence, but he is still motivated to eat.

Similarly, a homeless woman may have primary needs for food and shelter, but that doesn't mean she doesn't have profound thoughts or creative insight, long to be a part of a crowd, or lack the will to act on other non-necessity-based impulses.

The homeless woman may become the next great novelist, but she will never cease to need nourishment and security. The monk may eventually reach complete enlightenment, but it won't last long if he doesn't have a sip of water every now and again.

This is why motivational theories are simply ... theories. They are important and useful to become familiar with and to understand, but no single theory or interpretation of them will make sense for everyone in every situation.

The reason behind this series of articles is to introduce you to some of the major theories behind motivation. If one makes sense, learn more about it and find out how it works.

Specifically, what you need to do or learn to go to work every day, enjoy it and live profitably and peacefully.

Amy B. Garvey is Secretary of NAOPP. She works in the Upstate of South Carolina as a sales agent for New York-based Business Payment Systems. Call her at 864-901-8722 or e-mail her at agarvey@bpsmerchant.net.



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#### Education (continued)

#### Marketing 101

#### Click Print, Close Deals

#### By Sam Neuman

Cynergy Data

onventional wisdom says that good salespeople need only their wits to sign merchants. Many excellent books have been written on the subjects of successful sales pitches and can't-miss closing strategies, including Paul H. Green's "Good Selling!" and "Good Selling! 2," two books that every new merchant level salesperson (MLS) should read.

But sometimes a solid sales pitch simply isn't enough to win over merchants. When words alone fail to convince them to sign on the dotted line, it's time to bring out the big guns: printed marketing materials.

Printed materials, from brochures and rate sheets to promotional slicks and customized presentations, will open doors, make you as an MLS stand out, add credibility to pitches and dramatically increase your closing ratio. But too many sales agents simply don't use them; instead, they prefer to rely on verbal selling techniques.

The truth is that time and money invested in creating and using printed marketing materials will come back to you many times over. Think of it this way: It doesn't take long to eat a dozen holiday cookies, but the effects will linger long after New Year's has come and gone.

Similarly, a small investment of time and money to create a library of personalized print materials will swell your portfolio dramatically and help you to sign the merchants that will earn you hefty residual checks for years to come.

#### Gain Credibility: The Corporate Brochure

Most merchants are used to having their work interrupted by walk-in salespeople pitching a variety of products and services. Of course, an MLS's visit isn't an interruption; it's an attempt to save merchants money. But, can you blame store owners for their skepticism when they encounter a steady stream of salespeople with can't-miss offers?

A corporate brochure that clearly and succinctly explains what your company does, summarizes your history and background, and contains accurate contact information will add tremendous legitimacy to your sales pitch.

Empty-handed sales agents who tell merchants that they want to save them money will arouse suspicion; sales-

people who back up their claims with easy-to-understand information about their company have more credibility and are more likely to win prospective merchants' trust.

The corporate brochure can be an expensive item to create in terms of design and printing costs, but it's also extremely versatile. Carry a stack of brochures for walk-ins and appointments, and mail some out to merchant prospects to introduce yourself and offer your services.

#### Make Your Message Clear: The Rate Sheet

Sellers of credit card processing face an obstacle that many other salespeople don't have to worry about: Your target market frequently doesn't understand exactly what you sell, why they need it or how switching processors will possibly save them money.

The rate sheet is a crystal-clear way to show merchants who you are and how you will help them. It's also simple to create: Obtain a copy of the merchant's current processing statement, and you have everything you need to create a compelling rate sheet that will guarantee a closed sale.

First, create a template listing common fees and processing rates. When you obtain a processing statement from a prospective merchant, fill out the template with new information that shows exactly how much money they will save by switching to your processor. (Almost every company uses different names for some fees; you may have to adjust the template slightly to make it match the statement type that merchants are used to seeing.)

Return to merchants with your rate sheet and a copy of their current statement. The difference, and potential savings, will be clear. When you lay your rate proposal out clearly and simply before merchants, they will be foolish to turn down an opportunity to save money.

#### Give Them Time: The Leave-behind Slick

Credit card processing is a confusing issue for many merchants, and special promotions, terminal leases and specialized services such as gift cards or cash advances can be even more baffling.

The best way to win over merchants who only have a few minutes to talk, particularly when the issue is somewhat complex, is to leave behind sales materials for them to peruse at their leisure. Leave-behinds can either focus on your core products and services or go

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#### **Education**



into detail about seasonal promotions, equipment options or additional services.

Regardless of the message being communicated, keep the materials very simple. Remember, you won't be there to explain anything that's unclear if merchants read it after business hours. Anticipate questions and answer them in the text. Keep messages as succinct as possible. Merchants will only read so much, and no one likes to feel that they've been assigned homework. If it's too long, it will certainly be left behind (in the trash can as soon as you walk out the door).

#### **Stand Out: The Customized Presentation**

The most persuasive way to win over high-level merchants is to show them that you've made an extra effort to gain their business. A customized presentation demonstrates that you've done research on how their business works. It also shows that you're willing to go the extra mile to give them service geared to their specific needs.

Merchants with a fairly sophisticated setup and some time to spare may be good candidates for a face-to-face PowerPoint presentation, but you even can persuade merchants without computers by using a printout of a detailed presentation. Of course, the same rules about brevity apply: Don't incorporate dense blocks of text or use hard-to-understand terms unless you'd prefer to make your pitch to the bottom of a recycling bin.

Keep the presentation focused on their business, your business and how the two work together. Taking a cookie-cutter approach to presentation design could backfire, so include enough relevant details and proposals to show that this is an exclusive offer for their business.

Of course, the best marketing materials in the world are no substitute for good selling. An ineffective salesperson with a portfolio of outstanding brochures, slicks and presentations will still receive more than his share of rejections. But for strong sellers looking to take their portfolios to the next level, strategic deployment of marketing materials will greatly enhance the one print material every MLS loves: the residual statement.

Sam Neuman is the Communications Specialist of Cynergy Data, a merchant acquirer that distinguishes itself by relying on creativity and technology to maximize service. Cynergy offers its ISOs: VIMAS, a cutting edge back-office management software; Vimas Tracking, a ticketing system that makes responses to customers fast, accurate and efficient; Brand Central Station, a Web site of free marketing tools; plus state-of-the-art training, products, services and value-added programs, all designed to take its ISO partners from where they are to where they want to be. For more information on Cynergy e-mail Nancy Drexler at nancyd@cynergydata.com.



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## Education (continued) Increase Sales Through Differentiation

#### By Ken Boekhaus

Electronic Exchange Systems

respectable veteran salesperson said this the other day: "We don't need to differentiate to sell." Reflecting on this statement, a blinding glimpse of the obvious hit me: Unless a purchase decision is based on chance (such as drawing lots or flipping a coin) differentiation *is* involved in making the sale.

I think this point is profound enough to bear repeating. For all practical purposes, every sale is based on some type of differentiation.

Even in commodity sales, where all products are equivalent, there are specific reasons why one supplier is chosen over the competitors and why one product or service is selected over the alternatives.

Price is usually the differentiator with commodities, but the differentiator could be many other things including availability, quality, selection, service or brand. It also could be something as trivial as having a history with a supplier, a prominent position on a certain list (such as in the Yellow Pages or a list of approved suppliers) or even the color of a logo.

When purchasing something, individuals make a selection based on a decision process; they are wired to have a reason to justify their decision no matter how trivial the reason may be.

What does this mean for selling merchant services? Whether you as a merchant level salesperson close the deal is based on how well you differentiate your offering from the other alternatives available to the merchant. Following are a few differentiators to use in signing

merchants without resorting to lowering the price:

#### Me

If located near a merchant you can install equipment, reprogram terminals and provide training. You can also be on site, if necessary, to help the merchant resolve a problem. Merchants find comfort in having someone nearby who will be there for them in a reasonable amount of time.

#### Me, Too

If you are personable and appear to be highly qualified, you are more likely to get a merchant's business. Individuals want to do business with those whom they like and believe are qualified. Hone your interpersonal skills.

#### **Something New**

Merchants are bombarded by acquirers all the time. Show them something different. If they have a high average ticket and don't accept PIN debit, talk to them about the cost savings of PIN debit over signature debit (despite maintaining good margins for you.) This isn't lowering the price; it is lowering their costs.

Could a gift or loyalty card program help merchants increase sales? If so, this might separate you from your competitors who led with credit card processing and lower price.

Do merchants need working capital to expand the business but can't get a bank loan? Merchant capital advances can reward you with serious profits. They also can provide "stickiness" to those merchant accounts since merchants must process their bankcards with you to repay the advance.

These programs are red hot with restaurants, liquor stores and other

retail merchants right now. If you do not offer a cash advance program to merchants, be sure that your competitors will.

#### Referred Me

Referrals will open more doors and close more deals than any other differentiator. When merchants must choose among strangers, the one who was referred to them has a huge advantage to win the business. A referral from someone the merchant knows is truly golden. Price and other competitive factors all take a back seat.

#### Knows Me

Networking is not only a good lead generator, but it is also a differentiator. If merchants know you through Kiwanis, Girl Scouts or Little League, they are more apt to buy from you than from those whom they have never met. If you are a regular customer, merchants will likely sign with you: "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours." Get out there and network, network, network. I don't care if you like it or not, networking is good for your business.

Remember, every purchase is made based on some type of differentiator. Price is always the easiest sale to make, but it also pays the least. Be creative. Differentiate your sales offering and profit from it through increased sales and higher margins.

Ken Boekhaus is Vice President, Marketing and Business Development for Electronic Exchange Systems (EXS), a national provider of merchant processing solutions. Founded in 1991, EXS offers ISO partner programs, innovative pricing, a complete product line, monthly phone/Web-based training, quarterly seminars and, most of all, credibility. For more information, please visit EXS' Web site at www.exsprocessing.com or e-mail Boekhaus at kenb@exsprocessing.com.



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#### **Education** (continued)

#### Many Uses for Visa's New Manual on Card Acceptance and Chargeback Management

#### By David H. Press

Integrity Bankcard Consultants Inc.

isa U.S.A. has released a revised and expanded ed edition of its "Card Acceptance and Chargeback Management Guide." The new version, which became available in September 2005, is titled "Rules for Visa Merchants: Card Acceptance and Chargeback Management Guidelines."

Every ISO and merchant level salesperson (MLS) should not only distribute a copy to merchants with chargeback problems (or even potential chargeback problems) but should also keep a copy to review themselves.

Visa's manual is a comprehensive guide designed for all businesses that accept Visa-branded cards. The intent is to provide merchants with accurate, up-to-date information on processing Visa transactions while minimizing risk of loss from fraud and chargebacks.

The information in it applies to both card-present and card-not-present merchants. It includes requirements and best practices for e-commerce.

It also contains detailed information on the most common types of chargebacks that merchants receive and what can be done to remedy or prevent them. The guide lists each chargeback reason code and provides information that defines each chargeback type.

It lists the most common causes of chargebacks and provides instructions for merchants on how to deal with them. There are instructions for merchants' back-office staff to re-present the chargeback to the issuing bank and tips for their POS staff and the owner/manager to avoid each chargeback type. It also provides risk management tools.

As an ISO or MLS, use this manual as a reference guide. You can then help merchants to determine what is causing their chargebacks. Also use the guide to determine if a change in process or an additional tool such as address verification service, cardholder verification value (CVV2 and CVC2), or Verified by Visa will help merchants lower chargebacks. These actions will help to reduce your overall risk exposure and allow merchants to continue processing with you.

The guide also will serve as a useful tool for training new agents. It includes a section on clearing and settlement that explains the processing cycle for Visa card transactions, for both card-present and card-not-present purchases.

It also includes a section on Visa's rules for merchants. The manual clearly lays out some of the rules that many ISOs and MLSs get wrong for their merchants. For example, some of these rules are:

#### **Dollar Minimums and Maximums**

**Rule:** Merchants should always honor valid Visa cards, in their acceptance category, regardless of the dollar amount of the purchase. Imposing minimum or maximum purchase amounts is a violation.

#### No Surcharging

Rule: Always treat Visa transactions like any other transaction; that is, do not impose any surcharge on a Visa transaction. Merchants may, however, offer a discount for cash transactions, provided that the offer is clearly disclosed to customers and the cash price is presented as a discount from the standard price charged for all other forms of payment.

#### **Split Sales**

**Rule:** Prepare one sales receipt per transaction using the full transaction amount. Merchants are not allowed to split the cost of a single transaction between two or more sales receipts, using a single cardholder account, in order to avoid authorization limits (or in an attempt to avoid Chargeback Monitoring Program penalties).

The guide also contains Merchant Web Site Requirements that many merchants fail to include on their Web sites. This could result in a fine to the ISO. The merchant Web site requirements are:

- Complete description of goods and services. Remember, merchants have a global market, which increases opportunities for unintended misunderstandings or miscommunications. For example, merchants selling electrical goods should state voltage requirements, which vary around the world.
- Customer service contact information, including e-mail



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"Recently, NetBank Payment Systems paid me over \$1,100 for simply referring a customer who needed a small business loan. NetBank Payment Systems makes it easy to generate additional income, and I don't have to worry if my income is secure. Since they are a subsidiary of one of the nation's largest banks, I know they are going to be there."

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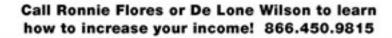
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#### Education

address or phone number. Online communication may not always be the most time efficient or user friendly for some customers. Including a customer service telephone number as well as an e-mail address promotes customer satisfaction.

- Return, refund and cancellation policy: This policy must be clearly posted.
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   They should check with their merchant bank to ensure the disclosure is made in accordance with the Visa U.S.A. Inc. Operating Regulations and local law.
- Export restrictions (if known).

Visa's guide also explains in detail the Copy Request Process and the updated Chargeback Life Cycle that you can use as a training tool and should distribute to all merchants with chargeback problems. It has sections on chargeback remedies and how to avoid chargebacks. It also lists the reason codes with the most common causes and how merchants should respond to and avoid chargebacks for that specific reason code.

The "Rules for Visa Merchants: Card Acceptance and Chargeback Management Guidelines" manual is posted on Visa's Web site in PDF format. Download a copy at: www.usa.visa.com/download/business/accepting\_visa/ops\_risk\_management/rules\_for\_visa\_merchants.pdf.

Why not provide merchants with a copy as a holiday gift? This gesture will go a long way in terms of retaining your merchants. They'll be grateful to you for helping them to avoid termination because of rule violations or excessive chargebacks.

Happy holidays to all the readers of The Green Sheet and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous New Year.

David H. Press is Principal and President of Integrity Bankcard Consultants Inc. Phone him at 630-637-4010, e-mail dhp@integritybankcard.com or visit www.integritybankcard.com .



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## Education (continued) Retail via the Web: Swiping a Card Through an Internet Browser

By Ben Goretsky

USA ePay

or the most part, retail or "swiped" merchants have two main types of payment processing solutions from which to choose. The most common is, of course, the POS terminal, which sits on the merchant's countertop. It uses either a dial-up or an Ethernet connection to access a network, process the transaction, and then print a receipt through a built-in or attached printer.

The second solution is a software application installed on a computer at the check out with a USB-based card swiper attached. Now, however, a technology is emerging that will provide retail merchants with a third option: "Swipe via the Web." Through this technology, retail merchants still have a card-reader attached to their computer, but now they simply go to a Web site to process the swiped transaction.







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#### **Behind the Technology**

With recent advancements in Internet browsers and Internet protocol-based payment technology, the ability to process retail payments directly through a browser is now possible. Gateways, which were once set up to process only Internet and mail order transactions, now support retail transactions with magnetic-stripe data. These gateways and browsers are now more robust. They support better scripts and languages, which allows the online application to run through the browser on any computer.

#### In Use Today

Even though this technology sounds new it is already being used. Many counties and municipalities across the United States have implemented it. Courthouses, county registration buildings and police stations, for example, are using USB-card readers; employees simply go to their payment application Web site when they need to process payments.

The benefits of using this type of system are (to name only a few):

- All processing (even through multiple computers) is linked to one merchant account.
- Existing equipment (computer) is used and no software is required.
- The solution provides easy access for processing credit cards instead of being limited to one or two locations.

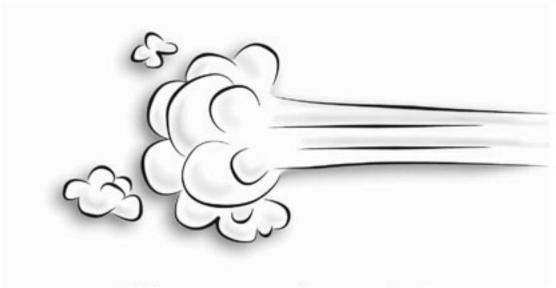
#### The Future of "Retail via the Web"

The ability to process swiped credit cards via the Web could become a revolutionary advancement in the credit card industry. Imagine all retailers using computers with a DSL/high-speed Internet connection and processing transactions with this type of solution instead of with expensive cash registers and POS terminals.

Also, imagine the keyboard of every consumer's computer system equipped with a card-swipe or smart-card reader. Imagine Web sites that accept online orders but are all using the same technology. When customers go to these Web sites to make purchases, they do not need to type in their card data. Instead, they simply swipe their cards ... the best part is that these merchants are charged a retail or "swiped" rate. This is definitely one of those technologies to keep your eyes on as it evolves and becomes the next big thing.

Ben Goretsky is the Chief Executive Officer and head of IT Development at USA ePay. He has been working with his brother Alex since they started the company in 1998. E-mail him at ben@usaepay.com or call him at 866 872 3729, ext. 350.

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View

#### Growth and Maturity in the Payments Industry

By Paul Rasori

VeriFone

redicting the future is an uncertain science at best. Nevertheless, it's useful at the end of each business year to evaluate recent trends and attempt to extrapolate how they will continue to unfold in the coming year.

I began by looking back about five years: 2001 was the year that VeriFone gained its independence from an ungainly four-year merger with Hewlett-Packard Co. Competitors declared themselves in a turnaround mode. Projections for the POS terminal industry were for revenue growth in the low, single digits.

At that time many viewed POS terminals as a commodity business destined for a lengthy period of declining margins and starved for R&D funds. The "experts" predicted that thin-client systems on the countertop would rely on



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Credit Card Processing Services provided by EVO Merchant Services a registered ISO and MSP of HSBC Bank, National Association, Buffalo, NY intelligence at financial institutions' host servers to provide new services at the POS, thus negating any need for applications to reside on the payment device.

Those prognosticators overlooked the lack of flexibility in those backend systems and a natural unwillingness by financial institutions to tinker with their legacy systems. It's no easy task to develop new applications for such host servers, and the legitimate concerns and bureaucratic inertia of bank IT departments make it practically impossible for them to innovate for the POS.

The past five years have more than proven that these predictions were wrong. Innovation at the POS is rampant. Technology and business issues have turned the POS systems business into a double-digit growth business with very respectable margins ... at least for some.

Competition among the card Associations is a large contributor to the industry's vitality and certainly a welcome change from the sluggish behavior of the 1990s. Merchants are no longer cowed by card Association supremacy, which has resulted in a healthier balance of power and decision-making over what is allowable and appropriate at the POS.

The desire of the card Associations to go after smaller, previously all-cash purchases resulted in reduced interchange and relaxed restrictions, combined with technology innovations, which have effectively revolutionized the entire quick service restaurant (QSR) industry segment.

Technology has certainly played a role in the QSR revolution, as elsewhere. The availability of always-on, Internet protocol (IP)-based processing made it possible to provide electronic payment at the countertop that is demonstrably faster than paying with cash.

That development, along with lower interchange and the ability for no-signature purchases, made it possible for QSRs to use electronic payment to speed up their throughput and increase their profitability.

Where do we go from here? Without a doubt, IP-based electronic payment processing will continue to sweep through the industry as more merchants understand the benefits of always-on processing capabilities and as the cost of broadband technologies continues to decline while telephone costs remain relatively high, or even increase.

Wireless will become an increasingly attractive medium for merchants of all types; it will even replace single-line telephone countertop connections.

Wi-Fi is already a no-brainer when it comes to extending one broadband connection to several payment devices

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#### View

using a wireless technology that essentially requires no extra cost. This is likely to be the dominant technology for the pay-at-the-table segment in the restaurant business.

Code division multiple access and general packet radio service are now stable and widely available cellular connectivity options that provide a low-cost, always-on payment processing capability for the mobile merchant. Wireless carriers have targeted such merchants with attractively priced service plans that will readily justify the cost of payment devices for at-home delivery, at-home services, outdoor venue and other on-the-go needs.

With such opportunity and the return of attractive growth rates and profit margins, one might think that the industry would generate many product developers rushing to take advantage, as much as the early days of the personal computer spawned hundreds of equipment suppliers.

In all likelihood, we will see small numbers of market entrants with innovative products. The reality of this marketplace is that barriers for successful market entry are high. As one commentator in the investment industry observed recently, "the credit card terminal industry has the potential to be a well-behaved oligopoly."

New vendors in the United States have to deal with strict regulations and security standards that banks and card Associations impose. To achieve scale, they have to do this in many countries around the world. As the investment writer concluded, "the value here is the software that interacts with the myriad of card Associations and banks, not the actual plastic box."

Any payment solution supplier that aspires to a market presence also has to achieve certification from a significant number of payment processors in order to have a credible national market presence. This is time consuming and costly; it also requires a trust relationship between the solution supplier and the financial organization that takes years to build.

Successful suppliers have to be strong, with a significant R&D investment. They should have a global presence, a streamlined supply chain and financial stability. They must be seen as reliable, which requires a track record of consistent delivery, a support infrastructure, demonstrable quality, and be perceived as an ethical player.

Without a doubt, any serious players have to be innovative. As we've seen with the declines of AT&T and IBM and others, market share can easily evaporate if an organization becomes static.

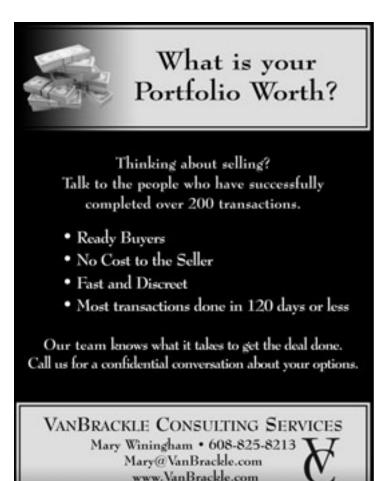
In our industry, innovation requires the ability and vision to take advantage of enhanced communications technolo-

gies, deliver value-added applications, provide secure solutions and focus and capitalize on change.

Suppliers also should be connected, which means having the ability to develop strategic partnerships that marry the core competencies of one company to another to create a larger presence. They should have relationships with banks, card Associations and processors, and the ability to provide nationwide services and programs to support a large customer base.

Those are significant barriers for new entrants to overcome, but it does not mean that we won't see new ideas and innovations from new players. The opportunity for growth will continue to spur development of new products and solutions, but we won't be living in the Wild West. The electronic payments industry is a vibrant, growing segment that has achieved a measure of maturity and self-governance that pays dividends for suppliers and customers alike.

Paul Rasori is VeriFone's Vice President for North America Marketing. He plays a key role in helping VeriFone customers integrate current payment and communication technologies. E-mail him at Paul\_Rasori@verifone.com.





**Feature** 

## Pique Their Interest by Refreshing Your Content

This is the fifth article in a series on developing effective Web sites. The previous article "Slippery Statistics of Digital Popularity" appeared in the Oct. 10, 2005 issue (05:10:02) of The Green Sheet.

eb developers face the challenge of creating a Web site that viewers will enjoy and find informative. This, however, comes with the caveat of knowing your audience's preferences and idiosyncrasies.

For instance, some individuals will read every page of "The Wall Street Journal Online." Others will skim USAToday.com, paying close attention to the colorful charts and action-oriented photography.

Web developers and designers must constantly come up with new hooks: tools, interactive components and essentially the stuff that will keep visitors on the site for a fair amount of time, and more important, that will keep them coming back regularly.

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WE DO SOFTWARE LEASES NOW! We Accept: 12, 24 & 36 Months Leases, with Credit Grade of: A, B & C Developers will most often create the technical backend of the site and its workings. Designers add an aesthetic touch. Often developers and designers are one in the same; however, if you are working with a team, make sure your goals are clearly stated. The end-result will be a successful site and a positive representation of your company.

A Web site that features a forum or bulletin board almost guarantees traffic if the company designates an administrator to monitor it.

As traffic to the site increases, it may become an administrator's full time job not only to keep the company out of legal hot water based on words exchanged on the site, but also to ensure that it doesn't harm the company's reputation.

Since it's crucial for businesses to stay in touch with current and potential customers, it's difficult to find a smart, professional-looking Web site without some variety of an interactive sounding board.

The recent explosion of blogging (writing an online journal and sharing it with others, whether subscribers or not) has opened many doors for improving Web content. Posting a blog or a link to it on your site is a powerful way to provide fresh material.

One doesn't have to be a Web code guru to blog. Weblog companies offer intuitive and user-friendly interfaces through which to speak your mind and educate others ... and they handle all the technical work.

To move a Web site higher in the search engine result rankings, include refreshed, searchable content. Continually adding new material and relevant keywords to your Web site will help people find it, even those whom you may not expect. Include a catch phrase or something else unique somewhere on the site to see if others will find it by conducting a search using those words. (Blogs and forums are not always searchable, however. Before putting all your eggs in one basket, check with providers to see if the content is public and searchable.)

News headlines will surely grab visitors' attention if it is pertinent or interesting. Sometimes it is worthwhile to include a tidbit that people are not expecting, but keep the content relevant.

Have you ever spent more time than expected reading the News of the Weird links? Not to say that a man who



#### Feature

fished an alligator wearing a gold watch out of his toilet isn't worth a laugh and a few minutes on your site, but giving visitors something interesting to come back to provides immeasurable benefits.

The more you keep the site up to date on trends and technology, the more others will look to it for guidance. They will also share it with peers and friends.

An extension of including headlines and a blog on your site is adding Really Simple Syndication (RSS) or Extensible Markup Language (XML) feeds. With these, visitors can place the content from your site onto their own pages or on news aggregators. RSS and XML feeds will bring visitors to your site from another referral source.

Case in point, GS Online enables visitors to import headlines and links from our News from the Wire section to their MyYahoo account or news feeds. The technical backend is based on an open sharing platform that the Web developer of the host site has engineered.

Creating the share with sound technical protocols will protect the site from hackers' attempts to infiltrate your server. If a third-party service

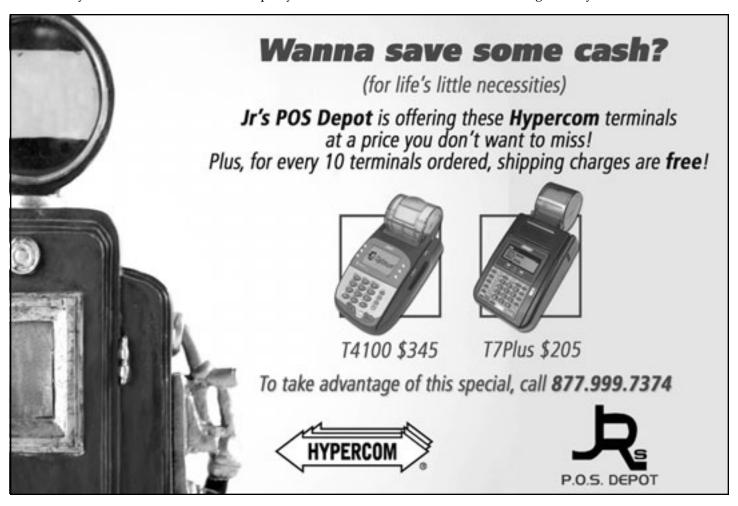
administers your site, be thorough and don't be afraid to ask questions; after all, your investment and reputation are at stake.

Taking time to create valuable and interesting content for a Web site is crucial, especially in the highly competitive and fickle virtual world. If visitors don't find what they need on your site, they will go somewhere else.

As the old saying goes, know thine enemy. Study other successful sites for inspiration, and tailor your offerings to compete effectively. However, do not copy their methods exactly; keep the site unique to your company.

Whatever you choose, keep the content fresh. You don't have to change it every single day, but make updates at least once a week or month. There are plenty of content providers and link partners with which to align your site. They will refresh the content automatically so that you don't have to worry about it. Search for "content providers" on the Web, and you will find hundreds of potential partners.

Always stay a few steps ahead of your competitors and develop an active interest in what your audience wants. You will have them eating out of your hand.





News

#### **New Scrutiny for Remote Checks**

he Federal Reserve Board issued a new rule that defines bank liabilities associated with remotely created checks (also known as remote drafts). The rules have been adopted as amendments to the two primary Fed regulations covering checks: Regulation CC and Regulation J.

Telemarketers and collection agents commonly use remote drafts, also known as pre-authorized drafts or paper drafts. Some Internet merchants, trying to avoid card-not-present interchange, also use them. Since these drafts do not bear authorizing signatures, but rather a statement that the accountholder approved the transaction, they are prone to fraud.

Bankers and consumer watchdogs say remote draft fraud became particularly acute beginning in 2002 when NACHA and the Federal Trade Commission began taking action against fraudsters using the automated clearing house to process fraudulent e-checks. That's why the Fed ruling on what party to these transactions bears responsibility when a payment goes south (the bank depositing the draft) is crucial.

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"Remotely created checks are indistinguishable from other checks unless manually inspected," a NACHA spokesman said. "Another problem is that it is a simple matter for anyone to print their own stock of remotely created checks using inexpensive, off-the-shelf hardware and software."

Here's how the remote draft process works: Telesales agents offer buyers (perhaps those who can't or won't use cards) the option to pay for purchases from their checking account. They ask customers to provide information contained on their check's MICR line and to verbally authorize the transaction. Once printed, the remote check is deposited into the banking system and cleared like any other check.

Presently, remote drafts are covered by state law as set forth under Articles 3 and 4 of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC), as adopted by each state. Under the UCC, generally the bank that pays a remote draft drawn on a customer account is obligated to re-credit the amount if the customer says the payment was not authorized.

If a paying bank believes that an item is unauthorized, it's up to that bank to take action; it has until midnight of the day following deposit to return the payment as unauthorized to the bank that first accepted the remote check.

Recently, the UCC was amended to place the burden of ensuring the legitimacy of remotely created checks on the banks initially accepting the deposits; these banks ostensibly are in the best position to identify fraudulent items. Once an amendment to the UCC is adopted, however, it can take years for individual states to make the changes to their commercial codes. According to the Fed, fewer than half of all states have adopted the UCC revisions.

"The state-by-state approach to the adoption of remote check warranties complicates the determination of liability for remotely created checks collected across state lines because the bank that presents the check may not be subject to the same rules as the paying bank," a Fed document detailing the Reg CC and Reg J amendments stated. Nearly everyone who commented on the amendments when proposed by the Fed earlier this year urged adoption.

As adopted, the amendments make it clear that a bank presenting a remotely created check to another bank and receiving settlement or other considerations, warrants to the paying bank and to all other parties to the collection process, that the transaction was properly authorized by the accountholder. The new rule takes effect July 1, 2006.

News

#### **Visa Pursuing Small-ticket Payments**

or most merchants with smaller-ticket items, cash remains king. They have eschewed accepting plastic for payment because the current interchange model does not provide a practicable solution: Interchange fees make small-ticket electronic transactions too expensive.

This may soon change, however. Visa U.S.A. announced an "aggressive strategy" to make card acceptance for small-ticket items better for consumers and merchants.

"The small ticket payments segment is ripe with opportunity," a Visa news release announcing the initiative stated. "The merchant segments that qualify for Visa's small ticket program represent approximately \$750 billion in consumer spending, half of which is made with

cash annually." Visa's plan includes reducing the interchange reimbursement fee on consumer check card transactions less than \$15.

In addition, signatures on transactions less than \$25 within select merchant segments (those with a low rate of fraud, such as drug stores/pharmacies, parking lots and movie theaters) will not be required. Visa is also expanding the types of merchants eligible for its small transaction programs. The initiative replaces Visa's Express Payment Service, which only applied to four merchant segments.

Industries that now qualify under the new program include buses, tolls and bridges, newsstands, laundries and dry cleaners, copy services, and car washes. Visa will implement the changes in April 2006. The small-ticket, or micropayments, market suggests enormous potential. New research from the Aite Group LLC, a research and advisory firm, states that U.S. consumers make 138 billion cash transactions each year, half of which are under \$10.

Gwenn Bézard, the Aite Group's Research Director, however, anticipates increased competition for the card Associations and member banks.

"Even if interchange rates are somewhat reduced, it is very likely that U.S. merchants will look for alternatives to issuers' offerings," she said. Bézard authored the report "Low Value Payments: Looking for the Code Cracker." The alternatives she cites include prepaid debit, aggregation and biometric automated clearing house payments.





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## Longer Battery Life for Mobile Payments

**Product: Mobile Swipe** 

Company: Semtek Innovative Solutions Corp.

any types of merchants could benefit from accepting card payments while in the field, and companies in the electronic payments industry are making much effort to enable everyone from plumbers to pizza deliverers to take plastic.

Some kinks still exist in the system, however. Attaching card readers to mobile devices such as cell phones and PDAs, though convenient, is not very efficient in terms of extending the device's battery life. Constant use drains the power supply, especially when something is attached.

Semtek Innovative Solutions Corp., which specializes in mobile payment solutions, recently received a patent (US 6,944,782) on a magnetic stripe reader (MSR) that serves as the backbone for its new Mobile Swipe solution.

The MSR only uses the electrical power that is supplied by the mobile device. Unless a card is being swiped, the MSR remains in sleep mode, barely taking a scratch out of the battery's life.

Credit card transactions also can be keyed in, if necessary, and there is an instant authentication response. The card data are triple-DES encrypted right at the card reader.

To complement the hardware, Semtek offers Mobile Swipe on the Web, its backend processing software solution for mobile payments.

Mobile Swipe on the Web enables merchants to track the card processing activity by the device's user and the device itself. It also allows for card-not-present transactions for e-commerce and MO/TO merchants and "any-time" access to reports of merchants' sales activity.

The Mobile Swipe solution works with a variety of handheld devices and cell phones.

#### Semtek Innovative Solutions Corp.

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**NewProducts** 

#### Credit Card Imprinters ... Just in Case

Product: Financial and retail credit card imprinters

Company: Data Systems Co.

on't worry, you have not gone back in time. It is still 2005, and there are still electronic POS terminals. The latest and greatest machines by all your favorite manufacturers will likely still be your first choice in what you offer merchants.

Knuckle busters, or credit card imprinters, however, have not gone completely by the wayside. Even the best POS terminal still can malfunction at the most inopportune time.

Perhaps some of your merchants do business both instore and on the road, and they are not ready to invest in a mobile card payment solution. Or, you know of a momand-pop shop around the corner and simply getting them to accept plastic is a feat in itself; you can forget about providing them with a state-of-the-art POS terminal.



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In these situations a manual imprinter is a must. Data Systems Co. supplies a selection of products that meet the varying needs of merchants. Weighing under a pound, the Model 505 Portable Imprinter is perfect for merchants on the go.



The Model 515 Flatbed Imprinter is a little larger than the 505 and perfect for in-store use. Its durable design will last for years and hold up under everyday use.

The Model 535 Pumphandle Imprinter is perfect for many uses including credit card sales drafts, ECR register receipts, service documents and delivery tickets. For the 505 and 515 there are optional adjustments in order to accept cards with varying levels of thickness. Data Systems also offers an array of merchant plates, ribbon tape, blank sales draft and other supplies.

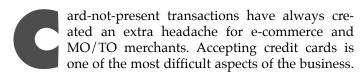
#### Data Systems Co.

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## Fewer Clicks With QuickBooks Interface

Product: NET1 Virtual Terminal QuickBooks Interface

Company: Network 1 Financial



Network 1 Financial (NET1), a division of Verus Financial Management, offers the NET1 Virtual Terminal to help make card acceptance easier for these merchants (and brick-and-mortar merchants, too). The Virtual Terminal, used with NET1's payment gateway, processes cards and electronic checks 24 hours a day and allows for automated recurring billing.

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### **NewProducts**



In response to merchant suggestions NET1 added a feature to its product. The software now interfaces with QuickBooks, the accounting software from Intuit, used by many merchants.

All Virtual Terminal users will have access to this new feature at no extra cost. Before this capability, Internet or MO/TO merchants had to enter a customer's card information twice; once into the payment processing software and then into their business accounting software.

By interfacing with the widely used QuickBooks, merchants using NET1 Virtual Terminal need only to enter the card data into the accounting software. With the click of the mouse, the Virtual Terminal will retrieve card data from QuickBooks for processing.

Once the charge is approved the QuickBooks file will automatically be updated. Merchants also have the ability to select which customers' payments they want to process at any given time, making it ideal for recurring payments.

The NET1 Virtual Terminal imports invoices from the merchant's QuickBooks application, enables the merchant to select the transactions to be settled and settles them, and then sends posted data back to the QuickBooks application. The new interface works for both credit card transactions and automated clearing house payments.

### Network 1 Financial

800-261-0240 www.net1payments.com

# Durable and Secure Keypads Withstand the Elements

**Product: 8000 Series PIN pads** 

Company: Storm Interface

ith the expansion of self-service POS systems, consumers are paying more and more with credit and debit cards without the help of store clerks. Many gas stations, parking lots, ticket-

ing machines, toll booths, carwashes and drivethrough lanes are now EFT self-service operations.

To enable card payments at these unattended locations, secure hardware that can withstand the elements and vandalism is a necessity.

Storm Interface, which specializes in data entry devices, offers a solution. The company recently released its 8000 Series PIN Pads designed specifically for unsupervised and outdoor locations.

There are two primary versions of the 8000 series: the regular size FT8000 and the space- conserving small-footprint, or SF8000. Both PIN pads offer optional features including number of keys, 13, 15 or 16 and illuminated keys.

The FT and SF8000 Integrated models include a choice of Storm's two 5000 Series LCD displays, a 122 x 32 dot resolution graphic display or a 4 line x 20 character display module. They also come

with a privacy shield that is mandated for unattended PIN entry applications.

There is also an option to include a card reader attached to the pad. The PIN pads can be ordered on their own or with a customizable combination of the above features.

All of Storm's PIN pads meet the relevant Payment Card Industry (PCI) and EMV requirements for hardware. The company provides the hardware to POS terminal manufacturers



Storm's 8000 Series PIN Pads

that do make their own outdoor equipment.

One important PCI and EMV requirement for hardware is the protection of data entered into the terminal. For this Storm offers the Universal Device Removal Sensor (UDRS). The UDRS is placed over the secured device. If someone tampers with the PIN pad, the sensor triggers the deletion of sensitive data.

### Storm Interface

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# Inspiration

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By working faithfully eight hours a day, you may eventually get to be a boss and work
12 hours a day.

- Robert Frost

# Take Advantage of the Boss

n previous issues we've discussed the rigors of the financial services industry, especially for those who either own their own business or are their own business. The hours are long, the vacations are short and the benefits are limited. If you own your own business you know first hand that the stress levels can get very high. It is up to you to pay bills, make sure taxes are current and handle daily administrative tasks.

You are the one to bring in new clients while maintaining fruitful relationships with existing customers. There is no IT department or help desk to call; you are the one to ensure that computers and communications equipment function properly.

Why do small business owners make this choice? Why would anyone subject themselves to this? Because they value the benefits that being one's own boss offers, such as control, choice and freedom.

Unfortunately, many small business owners spend most, if not all, of their time and energy toiling to make their business a success. Once they've achieved success they continue to work feverishly to stay on top. This relentless pace means they miss out on the benefits that attracted them to becoming a business owner in the first place.

They expend so much time and energy propelling the business toward success that they don't take advantage of the benefits of being their own boss. If this sounds a bit too

familiar, I encourage you to embrace what your position has to offer. Take advantage of being the boss, and make some choices that you wouldn't be able to if you needed to clear it with someone else first. Use your power. Exercise your freedom. For example:

### **Pick Your Breaks**

Choose how to spend your time. Schedule your workday. Go to the gym at 10:00 a.m. rather than at 6:00 p.m. so you don't have to wait for the treadmill with all the 9 to 5ers. Take an hour off and visit your children for lunch at their school.

### **Choose Your Office Hours**

You have the ability to control your business so that it best suits you. Perhaps you've noticed that the early morning hours are quiet and you want to open an hour later and stay open an hour later? You can do this because you are in control.

### Take Off Early

You are free to choose when you work and for how long. After all, you are the boss. You know what needs to be done. You know that if you don't do it, you are only hurting yourself. Therefore, if it's a slow day, take off early. This isn't cheating because you make the rules. Odds are, you will be working late soon so don't feel guilty.

### Renovate Your Space

If your workspace isn't working for you, change it. Maybe you need

to move your desk near a window, add some artwork or purchase a keyboard. If you need these items to make your time more productive and help run your business more efficiently, do it.

### **Set Your Own Deadlines**

You get to decide what gets done and when. If you've set a deadline that is creating a lot of stress or causing other areas in your life to suffer, you may need to alter it, and that's OK.

If this deadline means spending less time with your family and friends, or missed physical exercise, move it back. You will be a better worker if you have time to connect with friends and family, release some stress through physical activity and simply rejuvenate in general.

# Modify Your Job Description

You get to decide how and why the company functions. If you find that you are dissatisfied with your business, change it. Find out what is missing and modify it. Maybe you will decide that you only want to work with a few clients or only serve a specific industry. If you can make these modifications while still supporting yourself financially, why not?

Not everyone is cut out to be the boss or run a one-person office. But, for those who are looking to make some sacrifices in return for benefits such as increased control, additional choices and more freedom, it's the best option. Just make sure that you take advantage of the benefits.

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### Inspiration

### **Put Yourself First**

s a financial services professional you are likely accustomed to serving others. Your success depends on how well you meet clients' needs, respond to them and attune to their desires and expectations. Your job is to anticipate, recognize, meet and exceed their needs and expectations.

If you aren't at your best, how can you expect to produce top work for someone else? If you aren't at the top of your game, how can you help merchants stay at the top of theirs? Therefore, you need to put yourself first.

Putting your needs before your clients' is very difficult. There is probably a part of you that immediately reacts with feelings of guilt or selfishness.

You are in a service industry after all. Your success depends on serving others; how can you put yourself first?

### Your Mind Is Like Your Desk

Think about your desk or workspace. How do you feel when papers cover it, sticky notes surround the computer

screen and stacks of files begin to near measurement in feet? Do you feel disorganized? Rushed? Scattered?

The same is true for your mental outlook and well-being. If you start each day without taking a mental inventory and preparing, your mind is similar to that cluttered desktop.

It takes longer to respond to questions. Thoughts run in and out, half formed. To-do lists nag at you. If you take a small amount of time to clear off and organize your mental desk, you will be better prepared to serve clients.

Taking the steps to focus and prepare doesn't require a lot of time or schedule changes, nor does it require any special equipment or supplies.

All you need is to make some small changes that will have a big impact. You can perform these actions just about anywhere: while having morning coffee, commuting to work on mass transit or lying in bed before getting up for the day.

### How Do I Do It?

How do you start each day balanced, focused and ener-





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### Inspiration

gized? There are a variety of ways to prepare mentally and emotionally for the day ahead. Find an activity that helps you feel centered, prepared and focused. It may be a different activity each day.

Following are some ideas:

- Sit quietly for 10 minutes, simply breathing and thinking about the day ahead, or the day passed.
- Listen to music on headphones or catch a National Public Radio broadcast to learn something new about a different part of our world.
- Write down the thoughts running through your mind.
   Now the ideas are committed to paper, and your mind is free for more important problem solving rather than simple mental notes.
- Take a few minutes for a self pep talk. Reassure yourself of your skills and knowledge.
- Make a list of all for which you are thankful.
- Make a quick phone call to a friend or family member.

- Take a pen and paper and plan the day. The act of organizing thoughts, prioritizing to-do lists and reflecting on the previous day's activities will help prepare you for the day.
- Escape work-related activates by reading a magazine or book for 10 minutes.

Putting yourself first, even for only 10 or 15 minutes each morning, is not selfish. In fact, it's vital to the success of you and your clients. Practice such activities daily, rather than once a week or only when you remember.

As we all know, deadlines loom, crises lurk in the shadows and unexpected emergencies always are possible.

Having your mental desktop clean and organized will help you better prepare for such surprises.

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# DateBook

Visit www.greensheet.com/tradeshows.htm for more events and a year-at-a-glance event chart.



### **National Retail Federation**

95th Annual Convention & Expo Retail's Big Show 2006

Highlights: This event brings in leaders from the world's most successful retail and technology companies. One particular highlight is the "Store of the Future," the ultimate "Upscale Gourmet Market." Speakers include Ralph Alvarez, President of McDonald's North America; John T. Chambers, President and CEO of Cisco Systems; and Robert L. Nardelli, Chairman, President and CEO of The Home Depot.

**When:** Jan. 15 – 18, 2006

**Where:** Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York City **Registration:** Visit http://nrfannual06.expoexchange.com



# NACHA – The Electronic Payments Association

2006 Global Electronic Payments Conference

**Highlights:** The theme for the 2006 conference is "Understanding Market Variables and Opportunities for Future Success on the International Stage." Major topics to

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be discussed include emerging markets and how to capitalize in these new areas, creating and energizing participation in global payment solutions, the effects of risk management on business costs and the future of payments. Speakers include Roy DeCicco, Vice President, JPMorgan Chase & Co.; Richard Pattinson, Senior Director, Group Treasury, Barclay's Bank PLC; and Johann Bence, Assistant General Manager, National Payments, South African Reserve Bank.

When: Jan. 16 - 17, 2006

Where: The Westin Excelsior, Rome

**Registration:** Visit www.nacha.org/conferences

or call 703-561-1100



### Western Payments Alliance (WesPay)

ACH Rules Implementation Workshop

Highlights: The automated clearing house (ACH) is fast becoming the preferred means for processing checks. WesPay is here to help any interested parties understand the ACH rules to ensure compliance and proper use of the system. WesPay will hold the ACH Rules Implementation Workshop in cities throughout the Western United States. The meeting will look at new and recent amendments and how to implement them.

When/Where: Jan. 12, 2006 - San Francisco

Jan. 17 – Pasadena, Calif. Jan. 18 – Costa Mesa, Calif. Jan. 19 – San Diego Jan. 24 – Portland, Ore.

Jan. 25 - Salt Lake City and Sacramento, Calif.

Jan. 26 – Las Vegas

**Registration:** Visit www.wespay.org or call 415-433-1230



# Northeast Acquirers' Association (NEAA)

Winter 2006 Seminar & Outing

Highlights: This regional tradeshow offers an ideal opportunity for up-to-date industry information and excellent networking opportunities. Registration is free for those who sign up before Jan. 20. The first night includes an opening cocktail reception. Day two is filled with a vendor fair and seminars including information on choosing a processor and wireless solution. Day three is devoted to classic winter recreation including skiing and snowmobile rides. For ISOs that want to hold a sales meeting prior to the event, contact Jacques Breton at jbreton@gcfinc.com .

When: Jan. 31 - Feb. 2, 2006

Where: Grand Summit Resort Hotel and Conference Center,

Mt. Snow, Vt.

**Registration:** Visit www.northeastacquirers.com

or call 603-692-2408



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100+	\$10,000+

### For more information,

contact Ted Lasch at 1-866-253-2227 ext. 15, or on the web at: www.thealphaedge.com



# **WordSearch**

Put on your thinking caps, and find all the words listed below ... we've even started it for you. Words will be horizontal, vertical, diagonal and even backwards! Have fun.

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Brian Jones, Vice President Sales and Marketing:  $800-201-0461 \times 136$  Jonathan Brandon, National Sales Manager East:  $800-201-0461 \times 145$  Max Sinovoi, National Sales Manager West:  $800-201-0461 \times 219$  or log on to www.isoprogram.com for more details





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### NationalLink

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### **Nexus ATM**

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# BANKS LOOKING FOR AGENTS

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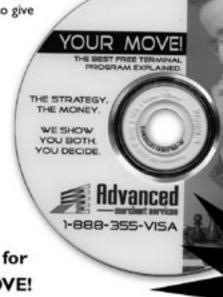
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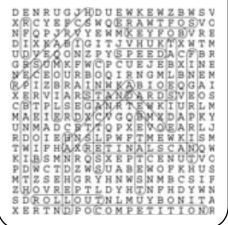
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