



## **Startups offer elixir for enterprise headaches**

By Colin Gibbs

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The wireless industry is good at churning out enterprise-focused applications and the devices to run them, but has largely failed to offer businesses an easy way to purchase, deploy and manage mobile phones. Two former Sprint Corp. wireless executives are hoping to change that.

The businessmen-Bruce Friedman, former vice president of Sprint's Mobile Computing Services Group, and former Sprint President of Business Sales Jay Highley-noticed the same problem during their tenure at the Tier 1 carrier: a dearth of resources for businesses looking to use a variety of devices and services. And they've each taken positions with startups hoping to fill the void.

"In my role (at Sprint), it was consistently clear that there was a gap between what the carriers were able to deliver to business clients" and what those clients' needs were, said Highley, now the chief executive officer of Integrated Mobile Inc. "There was a very common theme coming back in (from customers): `We need more help. We need more help.'"

Those cries of desperation have become louder in recent years as the lines between "work phones" and "personal phones" have blurred. Businesses, which have generally been hesitant to purchase and assign phones and services for their employees, instead find themselves poring over countless expense reports from staffers who use personal phones for their jobs.

The headaches are magnified when employees upgrade phones, lose their handsets or need to change service plans, said Friedman, who is now the CEO of Movero Technologies Inc. Movero studies indicate a 5,000-employee company typically needs to make about 12,000 changes or additions to its wireless service every year.

Both Integrated Mobile, which is based in Columbus, Ohio, and the Austin, Texas-based Movero have developed software that allows businesses to manage devices and applications, and both act as a managed services provider. Both are tied into carriers' back-end networks, enabling them to activate handsets and move phone numbers from one phone to another, much like wireless retailers. And both serve as wireless consultants, working with customers to find the most appropriate devices and service plans.

The idea is to give IT managers and corporate accountants a single point of contact for dealing with wireless problems. Operator bills are consolidated, so companies can write a single monthly check regardless of how many phones and service providers it users. Movero's Friedman said the service typically costs businesses \$3 to \$5 per month, per device.

Integrated Mobile's list of 200 business customers includes Abercrombie and Fitch Co. and toolmaker Stanley Works; Movero clients include GlaxoSmithKline USA, Hallmark Cards Inc. and Raytheon Co. Carriers are embracing the startups-and have even become a part of their business models. Instead of viewing the newcomers as competition in the enterprise market, operators tap Movero or Integrated Mobile for customers looking for a managed service provider, and the startups draw revenue from both carrier and customer. Movero, in fact, markets a white-label service operators can brand as their own, and is building a certification lab for developers building applications for businesses.

"We were waiting for the carriers to fix" the problem between wireless and enterprise, Friedman said. "But they're not organized around that. They're organized around consumer services."

Of course, other players are hoping to step onto the playing field as well. Mobile-phone distributor Brightpoint Inc. is building a team to help members of its reseller network to offer end-to-end wireless solutions for small businesses. Bigger companies like IBM are working to gain traction, and companies from the fixed-line telecom management space are struggling to expand into wireless as businesses depend less on desk phones.