Instructions: Answer all questions following the Case Study below

CASE STUDY: MIS in your Pocket

Can you run your company out of your pocket?
Perhaps not entirely, but there are many functions today that can be performed using an iPhone, BlackBerry, or other mobile handheld device. The smartphone has been called the "Swiss Army knife of the digital age." A flick of the finger turns it into a Web browser, a telephone, a camera, a music or video player, an e-mail and messaging machine, and for some, a gateway into corporate systems. New software applications for social networking and salesforce management (CRM) make these devices even more versatile business tools.

The BlackBerry has been the favored mobile handheld for business because it was optimized for e-mail and messaging, with strong security and tools for accessing internal corporate systems. Now that's changing. Companies large and small are starting to deploy Apple's iPhone to conduct more of their work. For some, these handhelds have become necessities.

Doylestown Hospital, a community medical center near Philadelphia, has a mobile workforce of 360 independent physicians treating thousands of patients. The physicians use the iPhone 3G to stay connected around the clock to hospital staff, colleagues, and patient information. Doylestown doctors use iPhone features such as e-mail, calendar, and contacts from Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync. The iPhone allows them to receive time-sensitive e-mail alerts from the hospital. Voice communication is important as well, and the iPhone allows the doctors to be on call wherever they are.

Doylestown Hospital customized the iPhone to provide doctors with secure mobile access from any location in the world to the hospital's MEDITECH electronic medical records system. MEDITECH delivers information on vital signs, medications, lab results, allergies, nurses' notes, therapy results, and even patient diets to the iPhone screen. "Every radiographic image a patient has had, every dictated report from a specialist is available on the iPhone," notes Dr. Scott Levy, Doylestown Hospital's vice president and chief medical officer. Doylestown doctors also use the iPhone at the patient's bedside to access medical reference applications such as Epocrates Essentials to help them interpret lab results and obtain medication information.

Doylestown's information systems department was able to establish the same high level of security for authenticating users of the system and tracking user activity as it maintains with all the hospital's Web-based medical records applications.

Information is stored securely on the hospital's own server computer. D.W. Morgan, headquartered in Pleasanton, California, serves as a supply chain consultant and transportation and logistics service provider to companies such as AT&T, Apple Computer, Johnson & Johnson, Lockheed Martin, and Chevron. It has operations in more than 85 countries on four continents, moving critical inventory to factories that use a just-in-time (JIT) strategy.

In JIT, retailers and manufacturers maintain almost no excess on-hand inventory, relying upon suppliers to deliver raw materials, components, or products shortly before they are needed.

In this type of production environment, it's absolutely critical to know the exact moment when delivery trucks will arrive. In the past, it took many phone calls and a great deal of manual effort to provide customers with such precise up-to-the minute information. The company was able to develop an application called ChainLinq Mobile for its 30 drivers that updates shipment information, collects signatures, and provides global positioning system (GPS) tracking on each box it delivers.

As Morgan's drivers make their shipments, they use ChainLinq to record pickups and status updates. When they reach their destination, they collect a signature on the iPhone screen. Data collected at each point along the way, including a date- and time-stamped GPS location pinpointed on a Google map, are uploaded to the company's servers. The servers make the data available to customers on the company's Web site. Morgan's competitors take about 20 minutes to half a day to provide proof of delivery; Morgan can do it immediately.

TCHO is a start-up that uses custom-developed machinery to create unique chocolate flavors. Owner Timothy Childs developed an iPhone app that enables him to remotely log into each chocolate- making machine, control time and temperature, turn the machines on and off, and receive alerts about when to make temperature changes. The iPhone app also enables him to remotely view several video cameras that show how the TCHO FlavorLab is doing. TCHO employees also use the iPhone to exchange photos, e-mail, and text messages. The Apple iPad is also emerging as a business tool for Web-based note-taking, file sharing, word processing, and number-crunching. Hundreds of business productivity applications are being developed, including tools for Web conferencing, word processing, spreadsheets, and electronic presentations. Properly configured, the iPad is able to connect to corporate networks to obtain e-mail messages, calendar events, and contacts securely over the air.

Sources: "Apple iPhone in Business Profiles, www.apple.com, accessed May 10, 2010; Steve Lohr, Cisco Cheng, "The Ipad Has Business Potential," *PC World*, April 26, 2010; and "Smartphone Rises Fast from Gadget to Necessity," *The New York Times*, June 10, 2009.

Case Study Questions:

1. How do the kinds of applications described in the case study improve operational efficiency and decision-making at Doylestown Hospital?

2. Discuss what it means to say that "the iPhone is an industry changer: It changes the way that you can interact with your customers and with your suppliers."