

**BUSINESS LIFE**

**GIDDY OVER GADGETRY**

Executives embrace new devices as workplace becomes 24/7 affair

STORY BY DANEK S. KAUS • PHOTOS BY MIKE STOTTS | BUSINESS PRESS

**T**hey're a cross between "Star Trek," James Bond and the boardroom. High-tech gadgets are everywhere and in few places are they more ubiquitous than in business settings.

Executive gadgets can help you communicate with clients, keep you organized, protect your secrets and stop people from stealing your lunch.

Jonathan Fine, owner of Sting Surveillance, a Henderson-based security firm, says that one of the latest items on the market is a biometric briefcase that can only be opened by the owner, unless others are validated to do so.

"It can memorize the fingerprints of up to 50 people," Fine said. "It will tell you when it was opened, how many times, and who opened it."

Those who want to protect their yogurt in the executive lunchroom can install a biometric refrigerator with three separate compartments.

"They were originally intended for the medical industry to keep drugs from being stolen," Fine said. "But now businesses can install them."

Perhaps one of the most Bondish examples of new high-tech wizardry is an ordinary-appearing pen that records video and audio. A pinhole lens is positioned so that the pen can record while in a shirt pocket. Fine's company, which focuses on surveillance systems, doesn't sell them, but they do give them away to clients.

Fine also owns a bar on the Strip called The Rockhouse. He uses his BlackBerry to keep an eye on things while away by accessing the video cameras in the bar.

An audio-video device designed for voluntary use is the Microsoft Roundtable. The device is capable of a 360-degree view and has voice recognition. One application is for group conferences in different locations, according to Tiffany Price, account director for gaming and hospitality at Microsoft Corp. in Las Vegas.

For example, a group sitting at a table in Las Vegas can use it to video conference

with a group of customers in another city that also has the device. As each person speaks, the camera changes direction to focus on that person.

Price says she uses Windows applications in both her work and personal life.

Like many, Price has found that gadgets have created a bleed through of work and personal life. Her cell phone is an example.

"I have all my applications residing in this one device," she said. "I can check e-mail, search the Web, edit my documents, launch Power Point onto a monitor. I can talk to someone about business from my son's soccer game on a Sunday afternoon."

Patent lawyer Rob Phillips, a shareholder in Greenberg Traurig, says mobile devices allow him to better serve his clients. He uses an iPhone and a newer model BlackBerry.

"It makes my clients' lives more wonderful," he said. "As an attorney, clients today are looking for immediate feedback on issues that can affect them. If you are responsive to your clients and do a good job for them, it can lead to getting other clients."

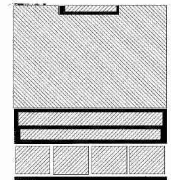
Scott Carlis, associate publisher of marketing for GQ magazine, is based in Los Angeles and New York, and frequently travels to Las Vegas for the magazine, where he employs his Treo and Motorola RAZR to interact with his team.

"We can text each other, look at PDF files of promotional campaigns and collateral material, look at spreadsheets and do analysis quickly and look at information from vendors," he said.

They also use these devices as marketing tools. During a postconcert party for Kid Rock held at the Palms two years ago, they sent text messages to mobile alert subscribers who live in the area announcing that the first five people to respond would win a free copy of the music act's latest album.

"We did that at 12 noon," Carlis said. "By 5 p.m., we already had 711 responses."

Sharon Chayra, president of Chayra Communications, admits to being



addicted to her BlackBerry and iTouch.

"It makes life easier because you can communicate in real time," she said. "I use freelance writers, Web designers, Web developers. Despite being in different time zones, I am able to communicate with them."

One downside is the occasional bout of repetitive use injury to her thumbs, though nothing critical.

"I can watch movies and listen to music. I rely on these devices not only to communicate but also for relaxation." Chayra said.

Dr. Said Daneshmand, a board certified fertility specialist, uses a Jawbone Bluetooth Headset to communicate with his patients and his partner, Dr. Bruce



**The Samsung MyShot on display at metroPCS. The phone features a 1.3 megapixel camera, bluetooth connectivity, @metro services and Web access to the latest sports, news and weather information.**

Shapiro.

"I like the voice quality of the headset. It's much better than other wireless headsets," he said.

With his iPhone 3G, Daneshmand can talk directly with patients while he is away from the office, even after hours, and communicate with them by e-mail using his private, secure server.

"Everything is confidential," he said.

One weekend, while he was hiking in Mount Zion, a patient called about a friend coming to town from another country who needed to see Daneshmand that Monday. Because of the communication devices, the appointment was set.

Daneshmand and Shapiro use iCal software to wirelessly coordinate with each other onto a master calendar on

their computers. They can also coordinate schedules with family members, as well.

His iPhone has the equivalent of a broadband Internet connection and has several useful applications for physicians, such as an equivalent of the Physician's Desk Reference loaded onto his phone.

While away from his office, he can look up medications, dosages, contraindications and more. The information is updated every couple of weeks, Daneshmand said.

He thinks mobile communication is a great tool for physicians and cites a recent American Medical Association article that said e-mail has improved communication between patients and their physicians.

David Boyle, president and chief operating officer of MPI, which provides software for auto dealerships, is another self-proclaimed BlackBerry addict.

"I never turn it off," he said. "I do all my business communication, and e-mail on it. I can do PowerPoint with it and connect it to a project with infrared function."

He carries a laptop but doesn't own a desktop computer.

"My office is wherever I am," he said. "As Americans, we are working longer days and weekends. (Gadgets) allow me to stay connected. The disadvantage is, I pretty much work 24 hours a day."

Shawn Lane, owner of Cheyenne Marketing, which is the local representative for 15 major movie companies, said her Q Phone lets her to work wherever she is and save time.

"I can send a short text message as opposed to having a 10- to 15-minute phone conversation," she said. "I can bounce back a response to anybody in seconds, even while waiting for an appointment. This morning I was waiting for someone who was 10 to 15 minutes late and instead of sitting there fuming, I sent out about 30 e-mails."

Bryan Ward is co-founder and president of Friendly Computers, a 130-store franchise chain headquartered in Las Vegas. Ward calls his iPhone a "revolutionary" device. "It has integrated so many features, e-mail, your scheduling, a full Internet browser, a way to view all types of files," he said.

Ward said the only downside to the device is that it locks owners into using AT&T.

Robert Jenson, CEO and principal realtor of the Jenson Group at Re/Max Central, said that he uses the iPod Touch to do video home tours of high-end houses.

"I can sit with a client and show them a high definition home tour with background music and narration," Jenson

said. "It brings more buyers and the right buyers. People may see a house and decide they don't want to go look at it. It helps our buyers save time."

Jenson has been testing the new video technology and plans to have his agents employ it soon.

Jim Carr, The Growth Coach of Southern Nevada, said his Bluetooth earpiece and his BlackBerry mean he is never far from his office. The small-business consultant no longer lugs his laptop along and has become self-contained with minimal hardware.

"These tools have taken away the chains of being in the office," he said. "Before, if I was not in my office, I was not coaching.

Now I can assist my clients at any given place and time. I'm 55 years old and I even know how to text."

He cautions that overreliance on gadgets can become counterproductive.

"Gadgets are a tool. However, you must have a strong plan to use those tools. They don't replace interactions with other people," Carr said. "If they free up time to be more productive and service your customer better, that is a fantastic use of your time. But if something gets in the way of servicing your client, then its just another fancy little gadget."

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Businesspeople are finding themselves more and more tethered to their personal communications devices. Many professional say job efficiency and ability to stay connected is worth it.

