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Founded by Apple Vets, Apperian Gets Down to Business with the iPhone

Wade Roush 3/5/09

The Apple iPhone is perhaps the most powerful mobile phone ever built, so it's no surprise that big enterprises want to use it, both to make their mobile workforces more efficient and to help customers access their products and services in new ways. But Apple, for a variety of reasons, isn't interested in catering directly to businesses with the features and software they'd like. So enterprise adoption of the iPhone has been ginger and gradual; you're far more likely to see sales reps, insurance adjusters, or delivery van drivers carrying Windows Mobile or Blackberry devices than iPhones.

To fill the void left by Apple, and to show how businesses can take advantage of the device's capabilities, a team of former Apple executives and developers has split off from the company to form **Apperian**, a Boston-based, iPhone-centric software consultancy that opened its doors in January.

Apperian founder and CEO Chuck Goldman says the company has a two-fold mission: "Number one is helping companies leverage their existing technology investments in smartphones more effectively, by mobilizing workforces and bringing applications to handheld devices; and number two, and more compelling and exciting, is helping large companies really extend their brands and provide transformative, next-generation, point-of-service applications to customers."

I'll explain what Goldman means by "point-of-service" in a minute; it's pretty interesting. But first a bit of Apperian's back story. (The name is pronounced "Appear-ian.") For eight years prior to starting the consultancy, Goldman was at Apple, where he ran the professional services division—the part of the company responsible for encouraging big, Fortune1000 companies to switch from Windows to Macintosh. Once the iPhone was launched in mid-2007, he took on additional duties as manager of Apple's so-called "iPhone Enterprise Beta Program," which had a dual focus: making sure that iPhones worked as "first-class citizens" in corporate data networks, to use Goldman's words, and building actual applications that companies could run on the phones.



But Apple subsequently decided that creating enterprise applications "was not really a business that they wanted to be in," Goldman told me in an interview yesterday. "They don't really develop applications for third parties. And if they did, they'd be taking on the risk and liability of making sure that the software functions right, that it doesn't crash anyone's iPhone, that it doesn't take down the network. Not that any of that would ever happen, but it's something they really don't want to get into, because of the liability." (For the thousands of third-party apps distributed through the iTunes App Store, the developers themselves bear this liability, not Apple.)

That created "a fantastic opportunity to build a business that is outside of Apple and that would still be critical to Apple's ecosystem," says Goldman. Big software consulting and integration firms like IBM and Accenture haven't traditionally helped their customers with Apple products, so they don't have engineers who know the Mac OS X operating system (a version of which runs on the iPhone). And Apple's existing network of consultants focus mainly on niches like desktop publishing and video production. "That leaves a real niche right now for a company like Apperian to come in and bring three things: knowledge of Apple and specifically Mac OS X development; size and scale, to the point where enterprises could work with us; and a real eye on next-generation applications—not just the thousands of kitschy, utility-based apps in the App Store, but higher enterprise-level applications."

Apperian launched on January 15 with a combination of angel and "strategic" funding, according to Goldman. (He declined to say whether the strategic investors include Apple itself, but that wouldn't be a bad guess.) The company has a staff of 12 executives, developers, and program managers, spread across offices in San Francisco, Reston, VA, and Boston, where ...[NEXT PAGE >](#)

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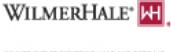
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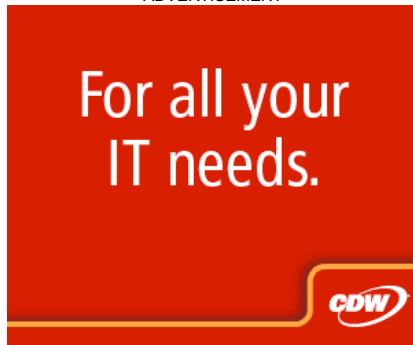
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Desmond Pieri 3/5/09 2:23 pm

Chuck's idea — bringing "big brands" like Triple A and Weight Watchers to the iPhone — is great! Sounds like the early days of the Internet when big brands — like Borders — were "beat to the punch" by start ups.

But why stop with the iPhone? Why not also develop apps that can run on the over 1 billion powerful non-iPhone and non-smart phones in existence? The success of the iPhone is great, with some 20 million sold in the last 2 years. But companies like Nokia sell 20 million regular phones every 2 weeks!

For Apperian to grow more quickly, after developing each application for the iPhone, Apperian could use the mobile platform of another Massachusetts company, Everypoint, and release a version of the application that would run on over one billion phones that people have in their hands today. That's a Total Available Market 100 times larger than the iPhone! Chuck, give it a look at <http://www.everypoint.com/>

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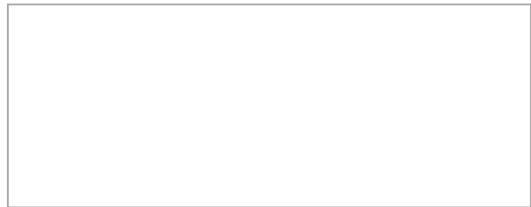
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