

# Productivity tools

**P**alm devices, cell phones, radio phones are sophisticated business management tools that can add more profits to a bottom line. A fully-integrated system will allow people, phones and other wireless devices to communicate with servers at office headquarters. Routing, scheduling and billing can all be done in real time.

So what's next? Here's what the manufacturers had to say:

**INTERGIS**

**STEVEN BROWN, SR., PRESIDENT**

**Product:** Visual Control Room software for landscaping industry

**Best features:** "It can reduce manual dispatch and scheduling time by 75% or more while reducing miles driven. It can increase productivity, control costs and enhance customer service." Accessible over the Internet, it also is compatible with Microsoft Windows 95/NT.

**Key trends:** "Routing and scheduling equipment and field equipment are both more affordable now. A landscaper can choose to integrate pagers with our system, or choose wireless network devices that let you print out invoices at the job site."

**Uniqueness:** "All routing/scheduling tasks are linked them together with customer accounting functions."

**On the horizon:** "The price of field communication products will continue to drop."



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**SANGOMA**

**DAVID MANDELSTAM, PRESIDENT**

**Product:** WANPIPE S-Series WAN cards

**Best Features:** "Users can add a wide area network (WAN) router to any existing server. Our 'no-box' Sangoma router card fits directly into a server. WANPIPE cards work on a number of operating systems, including Windows NT and Windows 2000."

**Design trends:** "The products will get easier to use and the prices will come down."

**Uniqueness:** An all-in-the-box routing solution that eliminates the need for an expensive, stand-alone router and all of its associated cables, connectors and power supplies.

**On the horizon:** "The cost of high-speed T1 access is coming down very fast."

**SERVICE COMMUNICATION SOFTWARE  
 KIMBERLY DEERING, SALES REP.**

**Product:** Service Pro software

**Best features:** "A service industry manage-

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ment system built by an owner with 25 years experience in the lawn and landscape business."

**Design trends:** "Handhelds and mapping are key trends."

**Uniqueness:** "It is so customizable. It works for just about any service company."

**On the horizon:** "We have two handhelds coming out. A small inexpensive one that fits on a key chain, and a more expensive handheld which will capture more data. Our new Visual Route mapping program shows all of a crew's stops for a day."

**VANGUARD COMPUTER SYSTEMS**  
**STEVE SLOAN, MARKETING DIRECTOR**

**Product:** Camelot software system

**Best features:** "This system offers automatic scheduling and routing, which allows contractors to track jobs and re-route or reschedule quickly. It handles ongoing service accounts and produces analysis/production reports for all employees." It is compatible with Microsoft Word and the Quickbooks family of software.

**Uniqueness:** "It does not require extensive knowledge of computers."

**VERTEX STANDARD**  
**SCOTT HENDERSON, PRESIDENT**

**Product:** VX Portable series of high performance radios

**Best features:** These lightweight radios have a one-piece, die-cast aluminum chassis with a weather-sealed mike connector, noise-canceling microphone and 700 mW audio output.

**Key trends:** "Landscapers want small, rugged, light-weight portable radios."

**On the horizon:** "Having a vehicle (or unit) location built into the radio, whether it is a portable radio or a mobile (one that is hard wired into a vehicle). The trend for more radio at a lower price will continue."

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Sangoma: WAN-  
PIPE S-Series  
WAN cards



**FLEETBOSS GLOBAL POSITIONING SOLUTIONS, INC.**  
**STEVE URQUHART, PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR**

Product: "The Boss" (FMS-2500/FMS-3500) fleet management system

**Best features:** "Stores GPS satellite data 24/7, recording and verifying the vehicle's locations, stops, and service equipment usage as well as driver habits. The automatic vehicle location (AVL) feature lets a fleet manager find

any vehicle within seconds from the office computer. With the automatic download feature, all stored data is automatically sent to the "home office" computer via 900 MHz radio signal.

**Key trends:** "This system controls fleet vehicle costs by identifying speeding, engine idle, actual job costing, on-time service and GPS-precise verification. Companies can enforce policies on speeding and off-hours vehicle usage, limiting a

company's liability exposure and potentially lowering insurance rates."

**Uniqueness:** "This is the only system that combines comprehensive GPS location data and automatic vehicle location (AVL) capabilities in one package."

**On the horizon:** "Insurance companies are looking closely at GPS technology for fleet management and vehicle tracking. They see reduced loss rates, decreases in speeding and at-fault accidents."

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**NEXTEL COMMUNICATIONS  
LINDA JENNINGS, DIRECTOR OF  
CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS,  
MIDWEST REGION**

**Product(s):** Variety of Motorola manufactured phones designed for business use.

**Best features:** "Technology — Nextel uses iDEN (integrated Digital Enhanced Network) technology developed by Motorola. It is a completely digital wireless system that combines digital cellular, Nextel Direct Connect, Text/Numeric Messaging, and Wireless Web Services in a single phone. In particular, Nextel Direct Connect® is extremely popular for the construction trades where out of office communication is necessary.

**Key trends:** "Data capable phones allow Nextel customers to access the Web."

**Uniqueness:** "Preferred business tool for businesses that need to communicate throughout the day and night. Hundreds of customers use our phones to do the work that they needed several products for in the past. (No more phone, pager and radio to do business, Nextel can do it all and offer wireless web access, too.)

**On the horizon:** "Nextel continues to look for ways to 'Get Business Done.' We just recently introduced the first Java -powered phone in North America which offers numerous applications specifically for the business customer, including construction calculators, expense pads, voice activation, speakerphone, etc. There'll be more applications to come." **LM**

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