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Ex-Monet execs launch Junxion, enabling Wi-Fi (almost) anywhere

BY DAN MEYER

Wireless networking is set to receive a jolt of mobility from start-up Junxion Inc., which is about to launch its mobile connection gateway device combining a Wi-Fi access point with wireless wide area network backhaul capabilities in a single unit. All the user needs to do is be within coverage of a wireless carrier's cellular network for backhaul purposes and then find a power supply for the box to become a mobile Wi-Fi access point.

Designed for businesses that need to set up ad hoc wireless networks for employees in locations that may not have access to wired backhaul, the Junxion Box allows users with 802.11-equipped devices like laptop computers and PDAs to access the Internet using a wireless operator's high-speed network through a single PC modem card. The company noted the device could support a number of business applications, including mobile work teams, conference and trade shows and

redundant backhaul.

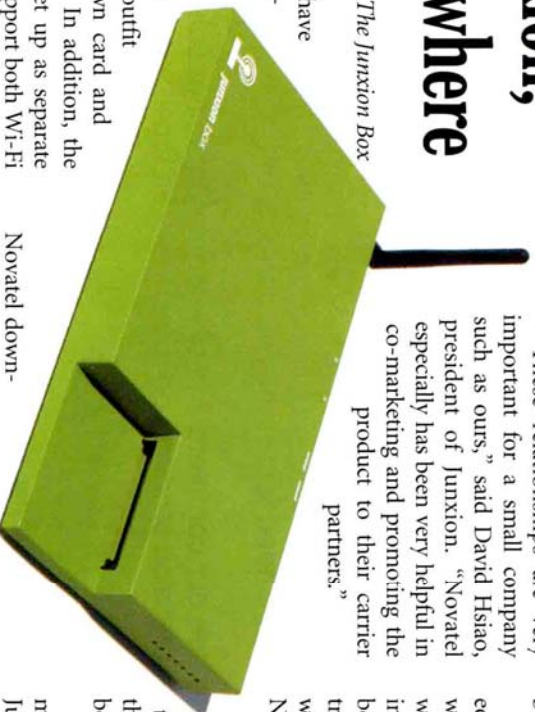
The Junxion Box

Junxion said customers trialing the device have commented on the cost-saving benefits as they have been able to support a number of off-site employees with a single PC modem card instead of having to outfit each employee with his own card and accompanying service plan. In addition, the device simplifies network set up as separate drivers are not needed to support both Wi-Fi and wide area network connections.

Junxion said the device is compatible with PC modem cards provided by Novatel Wireless, Sony Ericsson Mobile Communications L.P., Sierra Wireless and Audiovox Corp. and their accompanying compatibility with data network technologies: CDMA2000 1x; EV-DO; GPRS; EDGE and UMTS. Junxion also has a strategic partnership with Novatel as well as a distribution agreement with Dallas-based

Treo Technologies.

"These relationships are very important for a small company such as ours," said David Hsiao, president of Junxion. "Novatel especially has been very helpful in co-marketing and promoting the product to their carrier partners."



Novatel down-

played concerns that the Junxion Box could limit the sale of PC modem cards if more than one user could access the Internet using a single card, as well as similar concerns carriers might feel about selling fewer data access plans.

"It's still so early in the market for wireless data from both the services and device side that any incremental sales that can be generated from the Junxion Box is welcome at this

point," said Brad Weinert, vice president of business development for Novatel.

While new to the industry, Junxion is headed by former executives from high-speed wireless data services pioneer Monet Networks, which launched EV-DO data services in a number of rural markets in late 2002 before going out of business due to financial troubles earlier this year. Hsiao, who also worked previously at McGaw Cellular and Nextel Communications Inc.'s international operations, noted the Junxion device initially was conceived for Monet's network work as a way for customers to have additional access options for wireless data, but that the company "ran its course" before the box could be developed.

"We were always trying to push device manufacturers to develop products like the Junxion Box as a way to expand Monet's reach, but since the market was still so small there was always resistance," Hsiao said. "But, now that nearly all carriers offer some form of high-speed data service, there is increasing interest in this type of device."

Junxion added that the box sells for \$600 when bundled with a PC modem card and a wireless data service plan or customers can purchase the box without a card or plan for \$700.

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