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First Coffee

CRM, ERP, Contact Center, Turkish Coffee and Astroichthiology:

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Amdocs in Bulgaria, Ritmo for iPhone, Byki for iPhone, Google and On2, BatchBlue Experts, Nuance Study

The news as of the first coffee this morning, and the music is Diane Birch's *iTunes Session*. She's a new artist, with a truly expressive voice, First Coffee enjoys listening to her sing, but her material is so unoriginal. We've tried to like her album *Bible Belt* but can really only get interested in a couple tracks, these sessions are good but not much of an improvement, sorry to say, we listen to them and nothing really jumps out at us:

Bulgarian mobile provider Mobiltel, and "customer experience systems" vendor [Amdocs](#), have announced the deployment of Amdocs CES Customer Management products at M-Tel. The products deployed include Amdocs Smart Agent Desktop and Amdocs Support for the service process from initial customer contact to resolution. The products are built on Amdocs' Smart Client Framework.

More than 1,000 users across M-Tel's contact centers and retail shops can now access the tool to use when providing customer service. The deployment "is part of a larger project encompassing integrated billing, ordering and customer management solutions from Amdocs," Mobiltel officials say.

Amdocs also worked with its partner [SAS](#) to deliver SAS' Campaign Management software and integrate it with the Amdocs Customer Management products. Amdocs provides ongoing product support and maintenance.

Alexander Kuchar, chief technology officer at M-Tel, said having Amdocs provide both the products and the system integration services "drove a rapid, cost-efficient deployment."

By deploying SAS' Campaign Management software in conjunction with Amdocs Customer Management products, Kuchar says, M-Tel will be able to "plan and design marketing initiatives and promotions targeted to specific customer segments."

M-Tel is a wholly owned subsidiary of the mobikom austria group. Other group subsidiaries have deployed Amdocs in Austria, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Serbia and Macedonia.

In 2009 M-Tel upgraded its network with the HSPA+ super technology and became the first company to implement it in Bulgaria and the sixteenth worldwide.

...

First Coffee's fascinated with the plethora of applications available for the iPhone. Columbia, South Carolina's [Nuvo Group](#) has announced the release of the Ritmo Advanced Pregnancy Sound System, delivering sound to "prenatal listeners."

Yes, "prenatal listeners." In the words of company officials, Ritmo was created to provide "a convenient, comfortable and safe way for families to share the sensory and emotional experience of bonding through sound and music with their developing baby."

How does it work, First Coffee hears you ask. Simplicity itself: The expectant mother wears a "fashionable, lightweight" belt around her pregnant belly, according to Nuvo officials. The belt has four speakers and a controller, "which fits comfortably into a pocket."

Then the audio player plugs into the controller, which uses Nuvo's Safe & Sound Technology to "regulate output to a safe level for a baby to hear in-utero."

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This app will be highly popular with those who buy into the "Mozart Effect," the never-quite-proven but nice-sounding, "gee it'd be cool if it were true" claim that music "contributes positively to human fetal development, bonding and stress reduction," in Nuvo officials' words.

"Whether practicing yoga, walking the dog, or relaxing, Ritmo's state-of-the-art fabric belt is lightweight, elasticized, supportive, washable and irritation-free," company officials say.

"My Ritmo is so comfortable I wear it when I'm cleaning house, watching TV, or even reading a book," says Tara Meussling. "I am a big fan of The Temptations so I play them on my Ritmo so my baby can enjoy it too. When he starts moving, I know it's working!"

Uh-huh.
...

Transparent Language has [announced the availability of five new Byki for iPhone](#) language applications, providing English language learning with the Byki product line.

Each English Byki for iPhone app offers iPhone and iPod Touch users a way to learn over 1,000 English words and phrases. "Over three million English speaking language-learners," company officials claim, "have used Byki to learn another language. Now speakers of Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean" can use it.

The Byki learning methodology uses a paired language approach to introduce words and phrases. "The learner's native language supports the learning of English, making the learning process faster and more effective by virtually eliminating ambiguity and improving retention," company officials claim.

Some English learning programs use full immersion, or assume that the learner has at least a minimal English competence. Byki officials say their program provides "a fully localized learning environment," where "both the application interface and the learning support material are presented in the learner's native language," aimed obviously at beginners with no previous English knowledge as well as intermediate and advanced learners.

Its features include flash card-based memorization system for learning language, the obligatory Twitter integration, statistics to track your progress on all of the items you have learned, and something called "Perfect Recall," described by company officials as "the proprietary presentation algorithm recognizing which items of vocabulary you are struggling with and presenting these more often while showing you known items less frequently."

Byki was formerly "Before You Know It."
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[Google has raised its offer](#) to video compression technology company On2 Technologies in hopes of closing the deal on a merger.

Obviously "this could mean big things for On2 shareholders, as well as savvy small businesses," as On2 officials say.

SEO consultant Eric McGehearty thinks the [Google](#) video deal will have an impact on online searches. "I see Google pushing video as a larger component in search results," says McGehearty, owner of Globe Runner SEO, a search engine marketing and Web site optimization company."

Proper formatting is key to video marketing, says McGehearty, adding that "formatting includes closed captioning." Because Google will be looking at all content, he says, "it's important to have captioning, and it's another reason to make certain to include alt tags on all graphics."
...

[BatchBlue Software](#), provider of the BatchBook social CRM (customer relationship manager) for small businesses and entrepreneurs, has [announced the launch of its new BatchBook Experts Program](#).

The program gives users a directory of BatchBook Experts in a specialty service area to contact directly when needing help.

The experts program is modeled after their Small Business Web partner MailChimp's similar program. Founding experts include small business and industry professionals such as Lead Expert Scott Blitstein, owner of eSeMBe.com, Susana Fonticoba, a business technology coach for home and office computer training, Rob Riggen, owner of big yellow technologies and Gene Rosen, creative director of Photogenec Design.

BatchBlue is currently accepting BatchBook Experts applications on their site.

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"To get even more out of your technology investment you might have to pay an expert to help you learn how to use a product better or integrate it into your business operations, beyond how it comes out of the box," said Ramon Ray, technology evangelist, contributor to smallbiztechnology.com and author of Technology Solutions for Growing Businesses. "This is why certified experts will be the rock stars of 2010!"

"As our product has grown, so has our relationships with the people who are using it, and we have enjoyed learning the ingenious ways these individuals use BatchBook for their various needs," says BatchBlue President Pamela O'Hara.

Experts help with such issues as prepping database and spreadsheet files and importing them into BatchBook, setting up custom fields using SuperTags and importing customer data from other systems, developing custom reports and lists, writing scripts to connect the BatchBook API to other products such as e-commerce forms, blog sites and using the BatchBook API to migrate data from other CRM systems.

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[Nuance Communications has announced the findings](#) of a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of [Nuance](#) titled, "Driving Consumer Engagement with Automated Telephone Customer Service."

It found that consumers rate automated telephone customer service higher than live agents for certain straightforward interactions. "In five out of ten posed scenarios, consumers preferred automated telephone customer service systems over live agent interactions for tasks like prescription refills, checking the status of a flight from a cell phone, checking account balances, store information requests and tracking shipments.

Consumers' satisfaction with customer service leaves a lot of room for improvement, too, the study found: "Only 49 percent of U.S. online adults report being satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied with companies' customer service in general."

And we're just used to it by now: Automated telephone systems are "an expected and accepted customer service channel," the survey found, with 82 percent of US online adults having used an automated Touchtone or speech recognition system to contact customer service in the past 12 months.

Of course 93 percent of consumers have engaged with a live agent. Let's hope that's not going away any time soon, either.

The survey also found that a "strong majority" of consumers are interested in at least one proactive notification alert via their choice of e-mail, voice message, or text message. Consumers were most open to notifications related to the travel industry (93 percent), which include such things as flight status updates and confirmation of reservations for flights, hotels, and car rentals.

Eighty-eight percent of consumers were interested in notification from a financial services institution, with strong interest in transaction confirmations.

"The contact center plays a crucial role in retaining consumers, yet less than half of U.S. consumers report being satisfied with their customer service experiences," says Micky Tsui, Nuance's senior vice president and general manager, Enterprise.

According to Forrester's study, when it comes to evaluating a great experience with automated speech recognition customer service systems, two-thirds of consumers value having the ability to speak to a live agent at any time.

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