



*If I had to describe the benefits of RIM's Super Apps initiative to other developers in one sentence, it would be "It's your chance to get **above the noise, and under the hood.**"*

RIM's Super Apps initiative is to be applauded. In a world gone "app crazy", where the sheer number of apps seems more important than the quality of the apps, this frenzy has created a few problems for developers. Firstly, in a sea of apps, how do we get noticed

by potential users? Secondly, do we go wide or deep, i.e. do we try to make simple cheap apps across all platforms or do we focus on doing more of a quality job on one platform (and if so, which one?) And thirdly, how do we get the attention of the OEMs such as RIM (and let's face it, that's important because it's the OEMs that are running the successful app stores right now).

Embracing RIM's Super Apps program is a great way for developers to "get above the noise and under the hood" with the world's leading smartphone platform.

To understand what the term "Super App" means to the development community, this paper will look at it in two ways. To begin, we will look at the specifics of being a super app, and then we will look at Widelity's *momentem* app and service to see what super app characteristics the Widelity team has already built, and is going to build, in order to "go deep with BlackBerry rather than to go wide with every platform."

Read RIM's official pages on Super Apps are [here](#) and [here](#)

RIM has laid out some over-arching goals of being a super app, followed by six sets of principles that every good app should follow. In terms of those broad mission statements, RIM's quotes go something like this:

*"If you take the BlackBerry handset away from the user and they miss the app, then it's a super app"*

*Don't just build apps that people like, build apps that people love!"*

*"Build apps that users can't remember how they lived without, apps they interact with every day"*

*"Apps that are stickier and more intuitive, engaging and valuable to users, while being as efficient as possible on the network and the battery"*

Continued ...



Widelity is the developer of *momentem*™ and was recently acquired by Wmode, a major provider of app distribution and content management services. Powered by Wmode, Widelity provides a range of services to the app economy helping app providers to get above the noise and monetize by delivering scalable quality services.

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As we explore the six key features, listed in the box on the right, we will focus on what they mean to developers and to end-users. All of the features are interconnected, i.e. if a developer builds a background app, it has the potential to be always on, which means it can be proactive, and connected in real time, and it can interact constantly with the other apps on the handset, BUT it has to be designed to be efficient and to not drain the battery.

1. **Always-on.** One of the key benefits of the BlackBerry platform is that apps can be developed which seamlessly run in the background, constantly listening for events and constantly interacting with other systems, including sending and receiving data over the air (OTA). This provides the developer with opportunities to automatically engage with the user as soon as trigger conditions are detected, rather than waiting for the user to run the app in the foreground, it enables client-server OTA services to run and stay updated, and it enables the developer to gather real-time metrics on usage. For the user, it means a “click and forget” approach, because the user knows that those trusty super apps are always there working on their behalf with very little intervention. It takes the developer more effort to build a background app that runs reliably, but it is worth it.
2. **Integration with native apps.** By leveraging BlackBerry’s powerful APIs, the developer can transform islands of isolated apps into an integrated experience, where relevant data is passed between apps with no re-keying of information by the user. This makes the developer’s app much more “sticky” (see definition on the right) and indispensable. An example is a time and expense app which adds events into the BlackBerry’s calendar and tasks list, marks the location on BlackBerry Maps, and retrieves existing contact information from the Address Book. Harnessing the BlackBerry APIs and third party APIs makes for a more complicated app development, but it is worth doing because an integrated set of apps is more compelling to the user.
3. **Notification-driven.** Following on from (1), super apps not only run in the background but also make decisions on behalf of the user and notify the user in real time. Reminding a user of an important follow-up call, or that they are in a location near a colleague, or that they have used 200MB of data are ways in which BlackBerry’s platform excels. Now, with BlackBerry’s Push Service notification-driven always-on apps can be taken to a new level. It’s not only the user that can receive notifications; the developer’s back-end system, or a trusted third party, can also be notified about something that requires action. Overall, busy BlackBerry users will trust super apps to alert them to important information and to be there when they need them.
4. **Contextualized.** Following on the three points above, if a super app runs in the background, monitors events, and integrates with whatever else is going on, and notifies the user, there are terrific opportunities for pulling in the user’s mobile context too (such as location, status, usage, and history).

#### The key Super App Features, as defined by RIM

1. The Always-on Experience
2. Tight Integration with the Native Apps
3. Proactive and Notification-driven
4. Highly Contextualized
5. Social and Connected
6. Designed for Efficiency

#### Definition of “sticky”

The majority of apps are downloaded and are used for a few days then uninstalled. A sticky app is one that people use all day every day, and one they can’t live without.

A key driver behind the Super Apps initiative is to encourage developers to build sticky apps, by a combination of amazing sets of features, tight integration, and a compelling user experience.

Widality’s *momentem* service for BlackBerry is used 10 – 20 times per day by its power users, so it’s a true *sticky app*!



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### To get “Above The Noise”, here are Widality’s Top recommendations for developers

1. Get Under The Hood, do deep integration on one platform leveraging all the APIs and third party capabilities
2. Use the 6 RIM Super App recommendations to make the app as sticky as possible for the user
3. Design and develop the app properly so that there is no detriment to the handset’s performance
4. Leverage the power of the crowd to build a connected ecosystem of users that build content that the developer could never hope to build alone

4. **Contextualized**, continued. Context is where “the things that are known by the handset are used to make more sense of the information at hand”. Examples include the user’s location, people within their phone book, and what they are using the phone for at that time (e.g. business or personal applications). Widality is a big believer in the power of context because *momentem* already allows users to add meaningful information to every mobile call they make, in real time, and they use that to make sense of their bill and keep track of their busy life. There are opportunities to dramatically improve the user experience based on 5 pieces of context;

*relevancy* (show me restaurants that people like me ate at), *recency* (within the past 3 months), *vibrancy* (that have lots of good current reviews), *locality* (near where I am), and *totality* (that take into account my connected world).

For developers, leveraging the sheer amount of context available in the BlackBerry platform, and from the other apps being used, is the golden nugget to creating the stickiest app possible.

5. **Social and connected**. Historically apps performed one function, in an isolated manner, very well. These days the smartest app developers are embracing numbers (1), (2), and (4) enabling users to share their content and collaborate via their BlackBerry. There are a few specific reasons why this is so important; a) Crowdsourcing is a powerful way for the masses to build the next best thing, (e.g. a database of radar traps or the best business restaurants), and the best apps enable people to work together to achieve this without the developer having to create the content; b) Sharing is a powerful way to encourage viral distribution of an app; c) Who can argue with Facebook and Twitter that communities are here to stay, therefore app developers need to embrace this to create stickiness.

6. **Efficiency**. OK, if we believe in 1 – 5 above, we should now have developers rushing off to build apps that run in the background, are always on and always connected, that are constantly working behind the scenes with other apps and across the network, and that use the BlackBerry’s GPS function for context. The big problem with this is that poor development techniques will result in heavier processor usage, which in turn results in a phone with worse battery life, which doesn’t perform well, and may even freeze when the app is interacting. So a true super app must achieve 1 – 5 without impacting on performance.

#### *momentem* as an example of a Super App

*momentem* is one of the most popular business apps on BlackBerry App World, because it’s one of the stickiest. When the Widality team built *momentem*, the Super Apps concept hadn’t even been thought of, but luckily many super app characteristics are already built into the solution. This paper now explores some of



... the key features of *momentem* to give real super app examples.

- # *momentem* is a background app, it is always running in the background monitoring for events such as calls and time spent on emails, and automatically pops up depending on certain conditions, so it is truly a proactive notification-driven app
- # even though it runs constantly, it uses negligible processor cycles and the pop-up happens within a fraction of a second of a call ending, i.e. it doesn't freeze the phone. It is also a small memory footprint app
- # it uses the network very efficiently, with a tiny data payload, and can even use WiFi if available
- # after a call that needs to be tagged, *momentem* grabs the name from the BlackBerry Address Book and pre-populates the tag with it, saving the user from having to type it in again
- # *momentem* grabs a lot of information from the BlackBerry including the number dialled, date / time, duration, incoming or outgoing, and other fields such as whether roaming, and the user then adds further context including contact, project, billable time, and any additional notes. *momentem* therefore turns a boring call record into a contextual, relevant and useful tag that can be acted upon when it's time to bill or be billed
- # *momentem* has a client-server OTA approach such that the heavy lifting is done by the server, not on the handset. This distributed architecture is key to implementing a successful super app
- # A tag can be sent instantly via email to the user (as a reminder of a follow-up) and can even be shared via email with the other party
- # The Excel reports can be viewed on the BlackBerry's standard spreadsheet viewer

Widality announced several further super app capabilities at WES 2010;

- # to instantly add an event such as a call to the calendar (as a chronological record of the event) or tasks list (because there may be a follow-up from the call)
- # to instantly share and post a call tag on Twitter and other social networks, e.g. "I just had a 50 minute call with Dave P regarding Soccer" (sharing of tags is a common request)
- # to add a new *momentem* contact to the Address Book with one click, and to add someone from the Address Book into the *momentem* contact database
- # to leverage the existing Address Book categorizations (such as where contacts are categorized as Business or Personal)
- # to embrace the new BlackBerry Push Service to send alerts and reports on things like stats and usage from the server to the user in real time, ensuring users are always aware of how much they have tagged, and to which contacts

### What is *momentem*™ ?

There are 2 key components which together make up the *momentem* service;

- the instantly downloadable app for *BlackBerry*, that users rely on to tag their calls and other mobile activities with meaningful context including allocating tags to specific contacts and projects.
- the app communicates with the hosted *momentem* service which manages the subscribers, their tagged records, and delivery of Excel reports to them.

Users benefit by accounting for their time, recovering more of their phone bill, and keeping an audit trail of all calls and activity.

Read more at [www.momentem.net](http://www.momentem.net)

### *momentem*'s users already think we are indeed a super app!

- over 500 people have written in saying how much they love the service, click [here](#)
- subscribers use it all day every day, after every call, and over 5 million calls have been tagged
- the app automatically pops up after important calls, and after a couple of clicks the call is logged then it's back to work! A true background proactive notification-driven app that works reliably day in, day out.



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Terry Hughes, Head of Market Development, Widality

On the right are just a few of the amazing customer comments we have received. They illustrate how companies that adopt super app philosophies can win the hearts and wallets of BlackBerry users, even in this crowded competitive app market.

Terry Hughes, Head of Market Development at Widality summarizes RIM's Super Apps initiative in the following way:

"RIM has always supported the needs of their business and professional user base, and therefore has always delivered quality solutions. Now, in among the present chaos of hundreds of thousands of unconnected isolated, simple, cheap apps that are out there, RIM has come up with a way to encourage quality once more. By setting out benchmarks that developers should strive to achieve, end-users will be able to choose more sophisticated higher quality services, developers will find that stickiness equals revenue, and RIM will surely benefit as the platform of choice for apps that are... **super.**"

Widality is proud to be supporting the Super Apps initiative via its *momentem* service and via its exciting roadmap of B2B solutions.

"This app I use everyday and love it! Love it! Love it! Can't live without it like I can't live without my BB!" – Elizabeth

"I use your service all the time for my Business, it really helps to keep track of my various contacts, a welcome addition to my Blackberry. Thanks." Paul S

"It unobtrusively monitors each call (and email) and at its conclusion presents a beautiful menu by which the user may allocate the call to an existing contact and project. Notes may be added to describe the call. This elegant program puts money back into our pockets". – Robert B White, QC / lawyer, Canada

"I'm a pack rat and so I love keeping all of my logs and history. I find the call history on the blackberry very limiting, so getting my call history in an spreadsheet is really nice." Allan

"I like very much the functionality to understand how much money represent all those calls in my time. I am a CRM Director and I understand the value of making an appropriate follow up to my customers, also to keep in touch with them, attending opportunely pending tasks like calls, meetings, visits and other interaction types." Wladimir

"It eliminates the need for paper notes or even for notes scattered throughout your BlackBerry calendar." Laura M.

"Love the low CPU utilization and fast app response. Apps that dog the blackberry are uninstalled immediately. I kept this one!" Dan

"I miss your app greatly since changing to iPhone. I have spent over \$100 trying different time trackers- all a waste of time and money. You need to get a iPhone compatible application." Donald J Marsh



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