



Market Scan

RIM Extends Corporate Reach With Acquisition

Research In Motion aims to bring the signature BlackBerry device even deeper into corporate communications systems.

On Friday, **RIM** (nasdaq: [RIMM](#) - news - people) announced that it has purchased **Ascendent Systems** as a wholly-owned subsidiary for an undisclosed amount. This marks RIM's first acquisition since settling its patent dispute with NTP for \$612.5 million a week ago.

The privately-held Ascendent makes software that communicates between office phone systems and BlackBerry mobile e-mail devices. Users can push office phone calls and extend office phone features to their wireless device or any wireline phone.

"This deal allows us to further extend and enhance the use of wireless communications in the enterprise by offering a voice mobility solution that helps customers align their mobile voice and data strategies," said Jim Balsillie, chairman and co-chief executive at RIM.

Ascendent's CEO Debbie Miller says being acquired by RIM could lead to substantial growth for her company.

"The technology that Ascendent delivers should become as ubiquitous as RIM's data capabilities," Miller said. "With the distribution strength and name recognition that RIM has, I expect we will dramatically grow our business along the way."

Miller will continue to lead as vice president of Ascendent Systems for RIM.

With 4.3 million users, RIM leads the mobile e-mail field with a 70% market share, according to research firm Gartner. But its market share slipped 15% from 2004, partly because of its ongoing legal trouble with NTP but also because of growing competition from **Microsoft** (nasdaq: [MSFT](#) - news - people), **Palm** (nasdaq: [PALM](#) - news - people) and other smartphone manufacturers.

Ascendent is based in San Jose, Calif., and has fewer than 100 employees. The company had previously worked with RIM and partners with other tech firms, such as **Cisco Systems** (nasdaq: [CSCO](#) - news - people), **Intel** (nasdaq: [INTC](#) - news - people) and Microsoft.