

BLACK ENTERPRISE

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MAKING IT

Technology counts

Frye Claims cuts downtime with car phones, pagers and portable PCs.

For Thomas Frye, anything that makes employees more productive—and responsive to customers—is worth millions. That's why the owner of Frye Claims Consultation and Administration, a Belmont, Calif.-based insurance adjustment firm, is bull-*ish* on technology. By outfitting 15 field "adjusters" with everything from car phones, pagers, home fax machines, 800 numbers and cellular phones, to the new, portable pen-based computers, Frye has dramatically cut response time on insurance claims. Customers are happy, and they keep coming back for more.

The bottom line: Business quadrupled in just three short years, with revenues soaring from \$450,000 in 1990 to \$1.8 million in 1993. To top it off, the company has no debt and profits exceed 10% of sales.

Frye started the firm four years ago, with \$75,000 from the sale of a house and proceeds of his retirement fund from 13 years at the U.S. Department of Labor. His company processes workers' compensation claims as well as automobile and general liability accidents for insurance companies and self-insured organizations.

Field investigators collect the information necessary to complete these claims. Paid for billable hours like attorneys, they take statements, analyze facts and make appraisals throughout California. Two part-time em-



Frye keeps his staff on the go.

ployees work out of their homes, while eight work full-time at company headquarters.

Frye knew from the start that handling claims for large insurers would be costly, time consuming and labor intensive. Many hours are wasted as "adjusters" travel from the field, where they collect and record data, to their offices, where they process and proof their reports.

He also knew that the faster his staff could finish reports and speed them to clients, the more business they could take on. So, Frye turned to electronics as an antidote to downtime. Car phones, pagers and other devices now let employees "work out of their homes, increase productivity and improve quality," he explains.

—Rick Mendosa

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