



**MORE MOMENTUM**

[Working wirelessly from your car](#)

[Mental and physical fitness on the road](#)

[How to be the boss of a far-flung staff](#)

[A search for tech toys that really matter](#)

[Article Archive](#)

**RETURN TO MOBILE MOMENTUM HOME**



## Cruising in the Office

### 'Windshield warriors': Professionals working wirelessly car

By Marilyn Lewis  
Special to MSN



When Jay Shah needs to print a quote for a client, search his office database number or check a fact on the Internet, he climbs into his Mercedes ML500 S command into the laptop perched on a swivel stand next to the driver's seat. Using a cellular wirele dials into his office computer. "I can do anything in the office as if I was in the office," he says. "Eve to do it soon," he predicts.

Shah, a Sunnyvale, Calif., office telephone systems sales representative, spends his day making sale checking on the property rentals that he manages in the San Francisco Bay Area. Like a substantial number of American workers, from executives and salespeople to police officers and delivery people mobile office.

Some (auto)mobile offices are modestly equipped. Others, like Shah's, boast a printer, wireless wi AC/DC adapters hardwired into the car's electrical systems and a removable laptop stand attached t Other amenities you can get for the car-office: miniature desks with hanging files, little bookshelves compartments and slots for tiny mobile printers.

#### The car as office

Doug Mayer, president of MobileNet Inc. in West Chester, Ohio, helps "windshield warriors" — as vehicle-based professionals are called — turn cars into offices. His company sells and manufactures car-office equipment and technology.

What's hot with his customers these days, Mayer says, are power inverters that adapt DC current to AC (roughly \$50-69), screen holders (\$39) for laptops, and the new, thin, extended-use laptop batteries (\$300) that run up to 12 hours. USB keyboard lights (\$19) are popular, particularly with night workers like police officers. Laptop hoods (\$30) — visors that shade screens from glare and create privacy — sell well in Florida, Texas and California.

Mayer's best-selling mobile desk (\$279) is one he manufacturers. It's adjustable and attaches to seat bolts with a no-drill mount. Printer stands (\$140) also sell well: "Many mobile professionals want to print quotations, invoices and data from out on the road."

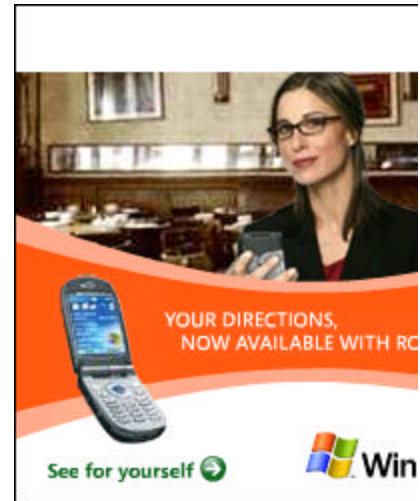
Mayer is enthusiastic about portable seat organizers (\$160) — compact, box-like desks that fit onto a passenger seat and store books, binders and supplies. These have slide-out writing surfaces and ca slots and electric adapters.

#### Sign of the times

It was the recession, ironically, that led Shah to equip his car as a mobile office: He had to do this after being forced to lay off his support staff. But now Shah loves his new mobile office setup. It is i



Learn More About Windows Mobile



(for third generation, an advanced protocol for high-speed transmission of data) PCMCIA card (\$200) plugs into a laptop. The card allows the laptop to talk to the same cellular towers that serve mobile phones. Monthly, unlimited usage can be purchased from cellular carriers for \$80, more or less, with service extended contracts.

A similar network changed the work habits of Ron Fuller, a real-estate broker whose Heartland GMAC office in Rapid City, S.D., employs 30 agents. Fuller became so much more productive that he encouraged them to outfit their cars similarly. As Fuller squires clients around viewing properties, he downloads the listings on the car. The laptop stand swivels so the client in the front seat can view color photos of the interiors and listings as they drive. "It's a multimedia presentation vs. 'Here's a sheet of paper, go drive around,'" Fuller can use the car's wireless Internet connection to research questions about local employment, schools and other particulars.

### Road test

These miniature rolling offices have a few drawbacks, though. Safety is an obvious concern: Mayer workers to pull off the road to use laptops or cell phones.

Also, the cellular network connection is only as good as your cellular network's coverage. Roaming is not available, Mayer says.

The biggest complaint users have is the connection speed. Shah, for example, says his car network is "pretty darned good," but the 56K connection is frustrating. "Hopefully, the connection will be more soon, he says.

Fuller, too, reports a downside he never expected. "I can get information so fast now, that the old 'Hey, man, I'll get back to you in a few days' just doesn't work anymore. People call me, they want to know 'Were the taxes? What's the square footage? And, by the way, give me the directions right now!'"

---

*Marilyn Lewis is a free-lance journalist specializing in trends and new technology. Windows Mobile is a special report from MSN.*

### Try MSN Internet Software for FREE!

[MSN Home](#) | [My MSN](#) | [Hotmail](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Money](#) | [People & Chat](#) | [Search](#)

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. [Terms of Use](#) [Advertise](#) [TRUSTe Approved](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [GetNetWise](#)