

## Developing Integrated Mobile Commerce Solutions for Handheld Devices, Blaze Mobile, Inc. Provides Easy to Use Solutions for Consumers to Conduct Safe and Secure Transactions through Mobile Phones

**Business Services  
Mobile Payments**

**Blaze Mobile**  
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**Michelle Fisher**  
CEO

**BIO:** Driven by her passion for innovation, Michelle Fisher has been at the forefront of leading the development of disruptive technology innovations for more than 20 years. Michelle Fisher is founder/CEO of Blaze Mobile. She is the company's key innovator, responsible for setting strategic direction and overseeing the company's rapid growth and leadership in mobile payments for retail, transit, and health care. Michelle is the author of scores of patents in mobile pay-

ments that covers the gamut from NFC payments, NFC sticker, mobile ticketing, mobile wallet, location based advertising, mobile health care, and more.

Prior to Blaze Mobile, Michelle led the development of over a dozen new commercial internet and mobile products at Microsoft taking them from conception to launch. Michelle also worked at AT&T where she envisioned and led the product development of Media Park, a forward reaching broadband service which connected creative professionals in Hollywood, Silicon Valley and New York to digital content libraries, five gigabytes of storage, rendering before many had even heard of the internet.

Michelle has a Master's Degree from Stanford University and a Bachelors of Science in Engineering degree from U.C. Berkeley.

### **About Blaze Mobile:**

Blaze Mobile, Inc. develops integrated mobile commerce solutions for handheld devices. It focuses on providing solutions for consumers to conduct a host of safe and secure transactions, such as balance inquiry, transaction history, bill presentment, payment and transfer functionality, ticketing, coupon, and rewards through their mobile phones.

**Interview conducted by:  
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor  
CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO:** Ms. Fisher, would you tell us the concept at Blaze Mobile?

**Ms. Fisher:** The concept at Blaze Mobile is to provide an application to consumers that enables them to perform a variety of functions in one application that they might otherwise have to do with multiple applications. By doing so, the integration and ease of use will drive consumer adoption.

**CEOCFO:** Could you give us an example of how it works?

**Ms. Fisher:** The Blaze wallet has multiple features. One of the most popular features is mobile banking. It allows consumers to check their account balance from one of eight thousand different financial institutions, including banks, credit unions, credit cards, and debit cards. The other big feature we have is ticketing, so a consumer can buy a ticket for a show seven days in advance, and the ticket is stored in the Blaze Mobile wallet so the consumer does not have to print it out and remember to bring it with them. They can simply open up the wallet and show the digital ticket to the ticket agent. Another feature we have is NFC, which is near field communication. We support NFC in any form, and we pioneered the invention of the NFC payment sticker, which can be affixed to the back of any mobile device. In doing so, the customer can make a contactless purchase by simply waiving their phone. We also support NFC that has been embedded or pre-installed in the phone, or is available in an SD card or SIM card. We are agnostic about where NFC is. We just want to provide the user with the ability to pay regardless of what device, carrier, or bank they have. Beyond that, Blaze

provides a means for brands to engage their customers as individuals human beings with personalized experiences based upon their uniquely expressed interests and behavior, rather than being treated as "demographics" or "statistics" and receiving a bland, and forgettable, one-size-fits-all experience. For example, a concert, sporting event or movie-goer can utilize Blaze patented technology to customized their live event experience to suit their individual desires relative to the food they eat, the seats they get, the merchandise they buy, and any value-added benefits the brand decides to include in the form of a rewards or loyalty program like backstage passes, or access to a meet-and-greet. This is all possible because Blaze technology allows the individual fan to interact with the brand via their mobile phone, and the data from today's interaction and last month's interaction can be used to create an even more targeted and individually relevant offer to that consumer to encourage future and more frequent engagement.

**CEOCFO:** Has this combined approach been tried in the past?

**Ms. Fisher:** Not to date. We have seen in the past and even today's features. Companies will offer ticketing, for example, but they will not offer the other features or they will offer mobile banking. There are a slew of companies that do this, and as you can imagine every major bank has an app, so the average consumer has four financial accounts. That means that they have to have four different apps that they have to open in order to get a view or snapshot of what is going on. There are companies that only offer NFC but they do not provide the other features and functionality that Blaze does. Other companies are now seeing the value of an integrated solution and are moving in that direction, but to date we are the only company that provides it.

**CEOCFO:** Did you have the foresight to do this before other companies or

the ability to put the technology together?

**Ms. Fisher:** Both. Most of my product ideas including a mobile wallet are based on my own personal experience in trying to solve some pain point or fill an unmet need. The realization for this idea occurred when I was shopping at a store back in 2005 and when I went to check out the cashier asked me for my loyalty card. I was not carrying the card from that store with me since it was a specialty store that I did not visit frequently. But, most people do not carry all of their loyalty cards with them. So, I was thinking I wish I had the card tied to something I already have in my purse such as a credit card or cell phone. That is when I had the light bulb moment that I should be able to have software (they were not called apps back in those days) on my cell phone that allows me to check my loyalty points, pay for goods, and do more. I went home and got online to search for software for my Windows Mobile PDA and of course, I found nothing. That is when I embarked on

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**- Michelle Fisher**

starting this company and writing a business plan. Beyond having the vision is also having the knowledge and experience to develop this type of product especially since back in 2005, there were not very many companies who were thinking about this in a holistic manner and had the skills and experience necessary to bring together an integrated application. I think my background combined telecommunications, mobile, software, and ecommerce was instrumental along with handpicking a team that had the right skills. It was quite a challenge in 2005 finding people who had deep experience in all four areas. I always knew I had to make a trade-off, and I would not be able to have all four skill sets in each person, but I looked for at least two-three of the skill sets. I realized with collaboration, there would be cross-pollination of skills and we could all

develop a knowledge set and that would help us build these products. We have recently received six patents, and we have over 100 more pending. As we are going through this process of working with the patent office, they look for what is called prior art- other inventions that are similar to yours. It is funny because when they send us a note saying they saw our invention, they cannot find much prior art, or the prior art has a very limited approach

**CEOCFO:** How do you get the separate banks or organizations involved, and are there particular ones you are targeting today?

**Ms. Fisher:** We collaborate with financial institutions and now it is a matter of relationships. I know almost all of the contacts at the large financial institutions and banks, but in the early days when I first started, I literally met Visa, MasterCard, and American Express at a boutique conference in 2005. They were all giving presentations at an annual conference called Card Tech Secure Tech. I flew to Vegas and approached each of the senior executives from those companies about partnering with us since we were developing new software for mobile phones

to enable customers to check their account balance, get loyalty points, etc. Only one of the three was receptive to that offer and that is how I formed our partnership with MasterCard. It is an evolutionary process. You may be cold calling initially and over time continuing to network and leveraging your network to gain introductions. I have had board members for the last eight years. One of the first ones was a former CEO of Visa and more recently, one of my board members is a former executive of MasterCard. It is important to network and constantly involve your board of directors, advisors, partners, and customers with the company.

**CEOCFO:** Who is using your service today?

**Ms. Fisher:** It is a consumer-driven product, so we do not have a B2B

offering yet. I say yet because we are currently exploring and in conversations with companies and to license our NFC with the new NFC smart sticker. Today, we are direct consumer B2C. We make our wallet available through the iPhone store. We also initially launched on a site called Getjar, which is one of the largest portals for java-based mobile applications, and it predates the app store. With the 3.0 release of Blaze that is coming out this summer, we will also offer an Android version.

**CEOCFO:** You have received a lot of recognition, and your website shows many publications that have covered your company. How helpful has that been, and what has been most significant in growing the business from the recognition?

**Ms. Fisher:** It is extremely helpful. We are a classic bootstrapped startup from Berkeley, CA and our growth has been very organic. We did not have the backing of a large venture capital firm. So, the press coverage has helped significantly in terms of getting us exposure that we would not have otherwise or would have had to invest millions of dollars in marketing to get. As a result of the press coverage, we have been approached by potential partners around the world. Just last week because of a press coverage by the Wall Street Journal about our NFC patents, I got calls from Israel, Korea, India just to name a few regarding partnership opportunities, investments, etc. The press coverage is critical to continue the exposure

and driving the relationships with companies.

**CEOCFO:** Would you tell us about your revenue model?

**Ms. Fisher:** We have multiple revenue streams from transactions, advertising, commission from ticket sales, and banking fees.

**CEOCFO:** Would you tell us about what is ahead for the company?

**Ms. Fisher:** We are excited about our pivot into mobile financial healthcare. It combines financial services with healthcare and enables consumers to use our platform in order to manage their health as well as make purchases with health related products. What we mean by that is, consumers have the ability to use our NFC sticker in order to ensure they are adhering to their medical schedule as well as capturing data from medical devices such as blood pressure or glucose machines. Then, when they have to go to the store to renew a prescription, they can simply use the same device to tap and pay at a pharmacy. We are excited about that because it is a critical need to provide technology for life-critical activities.

**CEOCFO:** That is a huge market as well.

**Ms. Fisher:** It is a huge market, and we are excited about being able to help people improve their health with this technology.

**CEOCFO:** Why should people in the business and investment community pay attention to Blaze Mobile?

**Ms. Fisher:** Patents are the new gold and it is rare to find a start-up company with the rich patent portfolio such as ours with over 100 patents issued and granted dating back to 2005. They are filed early and we have what is called broad claims on things such as mobile payments, advertising, and ticketing. The mobile payment industry is expected to be one trillion dollars, so we are positioned well to capture some of that market share. Our investors have the opportunity to participate in a very large and growing market, with a significant return.

**CEOCFO:** Do you have any final thoughts?

**Ms. Fisher:** For anybody who is reading this that has an entrepreneurial perspective, my advice is always to follow your passion. I often get questions from budding entrepreneurs wondering what they should do. The answer is whatever you would be willing to get up early to do, to stay up late for, or to do without being paid. When you do what you are passionate about, you are more likely to do very well and the rewards will follow. That has always been my mantra, and I think in starting Blaze in 2005 when the market was nonexistent, it was driven by my passion to create convenience for consumers and compelling products.



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