



From CES: Boosting Cellular Connectivity And Extending Battery

Posted by [Lamont Wood](#) Thursday, Jan 8, 2009, 12:52 PM ET

Mobile business can't stop for shoddy cellular connections or flagging battery life. Two new products give business owners affordable options for extending mobility that relies on connectivity and power.



You'd think that cellular connections and battery-powered devices would let you cut the cord, so to speak, with the outside world. Alas, the connection is still there -- but even more tenuous, and easier to break. Amidst the tidal wave of consumer products at the [Consumer Electronics Show \(CES\)](#) in Las Vegas, I spotted a couple of products for small and midsize business that address these problems.

For cell phones, the problem is that you can stray too far from a tower for a good connection, and even if you stay put your phone may not work inside your office because of its heavy construction. The solution: a signal booster.

That may sound exotic, but [Wi-Ex](#) was showing its entire zBoost line, for offices, individuals, and cars. The news was that they now have units that work with overseas networks as well as North American ones. The office version, which handles multiple phones simultaneously and covers 2,500 square feet, costs \$299 and personal versions start at \$119.



Meanwhile, some time after you do hit the road, your batteries will run out. If you brought your recharger and you're stopping at a motel that's on the grid, fine. Otherwise you'll get that sinking feeling.

In response, [Medis Technologies](#) lets you truly cut the cord by using [fuel cells](#) instead of batteries. They offer a \$24.99 plastic module about the size of a bar of soap. Squeeze it and, inside, water gets mixed with a borohydride solution and produces 20 watt-hours of electricity, which is supposed to be enough to recharge a cell phone six times.



Medis also has a unit with a wider selection of connectors for \$49.99, and a fuel cell flash light that lasts 90 hours for the same price.

CES will run through Sunday, with 2,700 exhibitors, and 130,000 attendees hailing from 140 different countries.

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