

ing an evaluation and training session with the PDA in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0022] The present invention now will be described more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which some, but not all embodiments of the invention are shown. Indeed, the invention may be embodied in many different forms and should not be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, these embodiments are provided so that this disclosure will satisfy applicable legal requirements. Like numbers refer to like elements throughout.

[0023] FIG. 1 shows the components of a system 10 for coordinating management activities associated with a plurality of employees in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. In a preferred embodiment, the system 10 coordinates management evaluation and training activities for a plurality of package delivery drivers. The system 10 can be particularly advantageous in assisting supervisors who are required to accompany package delivery drivers out in the field to evaluate their performance and administer on-route training. While the preferred embodiment described in detail below focuses on evaluation and training of package delivery drivers, it will be readily understood by those skilled in the art that the system 10 can be used to coordinate management activities for employees at many different types of organizations.

[0024] The system 10 includes an intelligent, hand-held, portable computing device 12, of the type known as a personal digital assistant (PDA), a remote personal computer 14, and a central computer system 16, connected for data communication to each other in a well-known manner as described below. The PDA 12 includes a processor 18 that is typically implemented as a microprocessor. The processor 18 is operative to control various devices within the PDA to receive, store, retrieve, process, and display data. A preferred PDA 12 for use in connection with the present invention is the iPAQ Pocket PC manufactured by Hewlett Packard.

[0025] The PDA 12 includes an input device that is associated with a display device to form a touch-sensitive data entry and display screen 20. The display screen 20 is connected to the processor 18 via a screen driver circuit 22, which operates the input and display functions of the display screen. In a preferred embodiment, a stylus (not shown) is used in cooperation with the display screen 20 for data entry. This is done by engaging a tip of the stylus against the display screen 20 and touching controls defined by the screen or writing on the screen. The processor 18 via the screen driver circuit 22 is programmed to be capable of interpreting handwriting and of defining button or key areas on the display screen 20. For example, the screen 20 may display a typewriter keyboard, a numeric keypad, a box for entering handwritten text, or controls that cause certain operations to occur, all operable by touching the screen, preferably with a stylus.

[0026] The processor 18 is also connected to a memory device 24, which may be RAM (protected by battery back up), a removable memory card, or other memory capable for use with a PDA 12. In accordance with the present invention, the memory device 24 on the PDA 12 stores data related to

one or more management activities associated with a management session. The memory 24 is also used to store any input data relating to the one or more management activities associated with the management session.

[0027] An input/output (I/O) device 26 is connected to the processor 18 and controls communications between the PDA 12 and other devices through a data transfer device 28. Preferably, the data transfer device 28 includes an infra-red port. An infra-red port is a known wireless device for optical data communication between similarly equipped devices that are remote to one another and will not be further described herein. As alternatives or in addition to the infra-red port, data communication between the PDA 12 and other devices may be over known means, such as cable, RF link, or other optical link. For example, instead of or in addition to the infra-red port, the data transfer device 28 of the PDA 12 may include one or more of the following radios: a Wireless Wide Area Network (WWAN) data radio, a Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) data radio, and a Wireless Personal Area Network (WPAN) data radio (e.g., Bluetooth, WiFi, etc.), for communicating with remote personal computers 14, the central computer system 16, or other systems.

[0028] Although the touch-sensitive data entry and display screen 20 is the preferred means of data entry, those skilled in the art will understand that data may be entered by other means, including audibly. For example, textual instructions and statements presented to the user on the display screen 20 may be audibly announced using voice wave files and a voice chip often built into the PDA 12. Other input devices, such as keyboards and data scanners may be connected via the I/O device 26. For example, in one embodiment the PDA 12 may be equipped with a bar code scanner. In another embodiment, the PDA 12 can include a point-and-shoot laser scanner or CCD reader, or other well-known reader. The PDA 12 can also be equipped with an electromagnetic scanner capable of reading, for example, radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags. In yet another embodiment, the PDA 12 can be equipped to receive input from other devices or sensors by means of FM transmission technology, which is commonly used in short- and ultra-short-range (i.e., a few feet) broadcast applications.

[0029] As shown in FIG. 1, the system 10 includes a remote personal computer 14 and a central computer system 16. Remote personal computers 14 can be available for use at a plurality of remote sites. The remote sites correspond to locations where one or more supervisors use the PDAs 12 to facilitate evaluation and training sessions with subordinates. The remote personal computer 14 is equipped with a data transfer device 30 compatible with one or more of the data transfer devices 28 of the PDA 12. With appropriate programming of the PDA 12 and the remote personal computer 14, information can be downloaded from the remote personal computer into the memory 24 of the PDA via the wireless link 29. Additionally, information acquired by the PDA 12 can be uploaded into the remote personal computer 14. Preferably, the wireless link 29 is established, for example, by an infra-red port, another optical port or a radio of one of the types described above. As alternatives to the wireless link 29, data communication between the PDA 12 and the remote personal computer 14 may be over other known means, such as a cable.

[0030] Application software on the remote personal computer 14 provides a desktop interface to setup the PDA 12.