Innovation Needed in Enterprise Mobility for Business

Smart Investments Today Provide a Path to Success

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The Imperative for Enterprise Mobility

Mobile devices have become part of our lives. Two-thirds of the world’s population is connected via one of these devices and 2017 saw more than 5 billion mobile subscribers around the world, according to the trade organization GSMA. It estimates that by 2020, new smartphone users will account for 66 percent of new global connections, up from 53 percent in 2017. Without question, Apple iOS and Google Android devices provide radically simplified access to technology people have come to rely on, and easily downloaded applications have become an increasingly well-traveled path to engaging consumers.

These devices now are also an established technology platform for business, offering new ways for work to be more productive and engaging. Business users want and increasingly expect their working environment to mirror their consumer life, offering a simple, user-friendly experience, one where all the applications and information they need is readily available. It thus is not surprising that organizations have incorporated these mobile devices into their enterprise so that workers can use them in business.

The Enterprise Embraces Mobility

Recent advances in mobile technology are changing how people work. Six key mobile technology innovations are making smartphones and tablets particularly valuable to business:

- Device proximity features provide environmental context and suggest action an individual might take based on his or her location.
- Speech recognition capabilities make it simpler and faster for users to access and interact with information.
- Human gestures and camera-based input simplify and speed engagement with applications.
- Biometrics capabilities including facial recognition and fingerprint authentication enable significantly better device, data and enterprise security.
- High-quality device cameras make it easier to capture, share and use photos and videos within business processes.
- Augmented reality (AR) technology enables workers to use the camera to digitally interpose virtual objects with their environment to enhance their work task experience and improve decision-making.
When considering how to take strategic advantage of mobile technology, organizations need to look beyond the value of devices simply for access to consider enterprise platforms that are built to support mobile devices and that embrace these emerging innovations.

It’s also easier for organizations to deploy mobile apps when the enterprise platform that will support them is designed for mobility. In choosing such a platform, organizations must consider mobility-related features. Specifically, an enterprise platform designed for mobile technology should make it possible for applications to be assembled and configured without a developer. It should enable personalization, including secured identity access that is specific to individual roles, responsibilities and needs. And it should have robust enterprise security support to protect corporate and customer information, including mobile certificates, encryption, multi-factor authentication and enterprise mobility management (EMM) integration.

It’s also important that the platform’s and applications’ design incorporate cloud computing to ensure business-level reliability, availability, performance and scalability. Our research finds that two-thirds of organizations today support mobile access to cloud-based analytics, and almost every organization (96%) reported that mobile technology has improved access to and use of data and analytics in the cloud. The platform of course should support access to transactions, analytics and collaboration across business workflows as well as maintaining a local cache to support offline work.

In addition, deployed applications should be optimized for whatever native technology environments are in use on the mobile devices. This means that applications should support specific gesture families on mobile devices. They should take advantage of device notification capabilities that can prompt the user to engage and should use voice and conversational technology to support that engagement. And as noted, applications should be location-aware through GPS to help provide application-specific personalization.

Data and analytics should be a part of the mobile platform’s application capabilities as it is essential to inform and guide actions. More than half of organizations (57%) indicate it is important to be able to access analytics from mobile devices. Presentations and visualizations of analytics should be configured in a way that makes sense when viewed away from the desk.
In evaluating technology, we advise where possible embracing machine learning and AI technology, which can yield more prescriptive analytics and thus enable better decision-making when using mobile devices. In this context, explore using location and proximity information for geospatial analysis so that the context of analytics is specific to the device and the individual’s needs.

**Taking the Steps to Get Started**

An array of opportunities and potential benefits await organizations that are ready to take advantage of cutting-edge advances in enterprise mobility. But to ensure improved efficiency and increased productivity, organizations should seek out mobile platforms on which to build applications that are designed to address specific needs. Mobile apps that are now available can improve the employee experience by increasing engagement and trust in an organization’s ability to help workers realize their potential. When, for example, marketing and sales professionals are working with effective tools, they can optimize potential revenue.

In considering support for mobility, look first to the front office, which in most organizations is already mobile-ready. There, evaluate business processes for potential areas of improvement, particularly situations when individuals are not behind their desks, when they are engaged before or after the day begins or as they are traveling for work.

For example, mobile apps can during a meeting help marketing professionals better understand performance and then determine where to make changes to improve the brand, campaigns and social media presence. Sales professionals should be able while having coffee at home to use their device to ascertain their quota and territory status as well as examine their closed bookings and pipeline and its alignment to compensation and should also be able to take action to improve. Field service professionals need a unified view of the customer while on their daily route and should be able to use their mobile devices to determine how best to engage and resolve issues. Managers should be able to understand their team’s performance and take action on what needs to be done next whether they are on the same floor or miles away. And customers need to be empowered with information about their relationship with the business so they can take appropriate action.

To embrace enterprise mobility, organizations should identify their goals and needs and then determine what’s available and what’s needed in software designed to support business mobility. We advise a three-step process:
1. Assess readiness by determining whether the organization has the software that mobile devices need.
2. Identify and prioritize investments that deliver value through the effective use of information and analytics, particularly those that provide clear presentations and visualizations, easy collaboration and prescriptive guidance on next steps.
3. Achieve a competitive edge by taking advantage of unique device technology that can provide workers and customers with an optimized experience.

Mobility is now a business capability. To catch up to the competition and gain an advantage requires organizations to embrace this as a priority, as use of a mobile platform supporting mobile applications will improve both productivity and performance.

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