

Will your organisation be an integrated mobile enterprise?

By [Cobus Burgers](#) 15 May 2014

Mobility has fast become the key differentia for businesses in Africa. It is becoming clear that businesses that do not adopt mobility will be challenged to remain competitive in today's instant and always-connected marketplace.

I believe businesses will increase their investment in mobility over the next two years. Will your organisation be one that simply uses mobile devices, or will it be an integrated mobile enterprise?

Organisations that simply use mobile devices typically support just a few mobile initiatives, such as bring-your-own-device (BYOD), mobile expense management, remote email access, or mobile-enabled key business applications. These initiatives are usually discrete and often have little integration with each other or with legacy data and applications.



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Designing a mobile enterprise

There are some critical items to consider when designing a mobile enterprise. Organisations that are mobile enterprises, in contrast, have enabled flexible and scalable enterprise-wide mobility - for employees and customers - using a holistic, integrated approach.

By taking an integrated approach that aligns mobility initiatives with each other and with business models, goals and objectives, these organisations are able to provide instant access to business-critical data and applications for a variety of devices, while still maintaining high levels of security.

Cloud technology as an element

Mobile enterprises may also utilise cloud technology as an element in their approach to provide the scalable, on-demand infrastructure that makes true mobility possible across the entire mobile IT stack. They use business analytics that draw data from both traditional sources and social business interactions - including analytics from mobile transactions and contextual data - allowing them to fine tune everything from relevant employee applications to customer service and marketing initiatives.

Becoming a mobile enterprise may be the best choice for any organisation. The mobile enterprise meets employee demand and increases productivity. Mobile access has become a virtual prerequisite for top performing employees, and the consumerisation of IT is a trend that virtually every organisation needs to address.

Whether the organisation likes it or not, employees will use the same devices and communication or collaboration tools they rely on in their personal lives, for their business lives too.

Benefits for the business

Enabling smartphone and tablet access, social media, video calling, conferencing and instant file sharing - along with mobile access to business-to-employee information - also have benefits for the business. Productivity and job satisfaction rise when employees can continue to work seamlessly across multiple devices depending on business need, location and circumstances.

On the customer side of the equation, the mobile enterprise's ability to provide value-added applications and present an enhanced body of product and service information on a variety of devices strengthens and enhances the customer relationship and gives customers even more reason to purchase.

Mobility improves operational efficiencies and reduces costs. The key attribute of the mobile enterprise, comprehensive integration of personal information, access points, data, applications, business analytics tooling and security infrastructure results in a more robust and more scalable mobile architecture that is less expensive to operate from both licensing and staffing standpoints.

Leveraging cloud technologies to support the mobile enterprise - especially when cloud-enabled mobility functions are provided by a third party - has additional savings benefits. Instead of having to bring in-house IT staff up to speed on ever mobile device and operating system, plus near continuous technology improvements, the organisation can rely on the third party to provide this expertise at little to no extra cost. All of the cost reductions can then be rechanneled into business-value improvements and innovation.

Transform the customer experience

The mobile enterprise differentiates and transforms the customer experience. New ways for a customer to interact with your organisation and its products and services can result in increased sales.

The mobile enterprise can make possible such interactive and engaging features as a Bluetooth product finder, SMS order confirmation, video product information, bar code scanners and mobile payments. This can make doing business with one organisation easier and more rewarding, while providing a competitive differentiator.

New ways for customers to interact with organisations can lead to greater customer satisfaction and higher sales. All of the new features also provide organisations with a wider and deeper pool of information on customer behaviour and perception.

This data can be incorporated into the organisation's big data or customer insights strategy, resulting in new and more targeted marketing efforts that deliver relevant information based on a customer's location at the time of access. In addition, improvements will be realised at all levels of customer service.

New services and business models

The mobile enterprise enables new services and business models. When accessibility of data and applications across multiple access devices is combined with a flexible and scalable infrastructure, the mobile enterprise can allow organisations to roll out new services faster.

Development and test environments can be provisioned in hours instead of days, while the transition from testing to full launch can be accomplished in minutes.

Because the mobile enterprise virtually eliminates the distance between employees, customers and the company, business models that would have been deemed too cost-risky and time intensive in the past can be revisited and new models considered. These models include online product delivery and employee telecommuting, among others.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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