Importance of quick, secure and flexible IT delivery

By Brendan McAravey

Delivery has always been a key differentiator in business. Whether it be goods or services, companies that are known to deliver quality offerings quickly, securely and flexibly, are already well on their way to success.

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In South Africa, for example, online store Takealot.com has become immensely popular over the past year, as their focus on efficient door-to-door delivery of a wide range of goods provides an answer for fast and reliable deliveries. Just as companies like Takelot.com ensure that their delivery models are continually evolving to meet the shifting needs of their customers, so too must your IT department. Employees expect their IT division to guarantee the flexible, secure and fast delivery of data, apps and information, and these expectations continue to evolve with innovation in the workplace.

For example, people have abandoned the one-device-fits-all work style and use whatever computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone best fits their needs - whether company-issued or personally owned. Desktop apps are making room for mobile, web and SaaS apps in the corporate portfolio. Meetings are as likely to take place online as in person. Digital content flows from wherever it is created to wherever it is needed.

Significant challenges

However, IT solutions, policies and management processes are often not suited for the way we work now, as users' demands change and accelerate quickly. Employees are comfortable with sourcing their own tools if IT is slow to implement a solution that helps them access the apps and data they need. Aside from security concerns, this can bring significant challenges for companies as they try to strike the right balance of introducing new business-enabling technologies while managing existing infrastructures and applications.

IT essentials

Whether you are managing deliveries for an online store, or focused on delivering internal resources to employees, you need to ensure you have three IT essentials in place:

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• Security - Organisations today face two seemingly irreconcilable realities: you've never faced so many threats of so many kinds and you need to make data more available in more places than ever before. At the end of the day, as an IT division you have got to protect what matters - apps, data and usage - without depriving people of the access they need to get their work done.

That calls for a new kind of technical and business architecture, where your security strategy will need to incorporate a variety of measures, such as data centralisation, the automation of policies and settings, and scenario-based access control. You'll have to account for every possible scenario - every combination of device, data and location - while keeping security manageable for both IT and users. You need to be able to deter, detect, respond and remediate effectively no matter what threats you face.

• Flexibility - Businesses and markets change constantly, so your company needs to be flexible. That means being able to choose the right kind of infrastructure for each purpose, whether cloud, hybrid, legacy or converged, on-premises or elsewhere. It also means delivering the right mix of apps, desktops and data on the right device for each user.

It is vital that IT has the ability to take a 'build once, deploy anything' approach that makes it possible to re-use the same infrastructure. In this way, you can instantly embrace new ways of working, bring new locations or work teams on board quickly at minimal cost, and empower IT to manage that whole diverse enterprise environment through a single control plane.

• Experience - The modern workspace isn't about ticking off requirements or hitting a static target. The consumer marketplace is driven by relentless innovation, as people gain new and better ways of doing things. Businesses should be no different. Your infrastructure should provide a context where you can introduce new capabilities quickly and seamlessly to help people become more productive and efficient.

Lastly, delivering apps and data is not about meeting just one or two of the above requirements - it is about making sure security, flexibility and experience are achieved and working symbiotically. When that happens, IT can reliably deliver secure workspace experiences to any device, empowering people and teams to work productively from anywhere.

ABOUT BRENDAN MCARAVEY

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