

The many faces of
Managed Mobility



inner circle

Where mobile
will take business
– and who will
lead the way





Managed Mobility seems to have appeared overnight. The dramatic arrival of consumer technologies – smartphones, tablets and apps – in the business world has launched a disruptive revolution, bringing with it mobile device management (MDM), mobile app management (MAM), hybrid apps and all the other facets of Managed Mobility. The challenge now is to understand what this transformation means strategically, and work out how to exploit the opportunities that it has unlocked.

At the Blue Door session for June 2014, Brendan O'Rourke, CIO for Telefónica UK, talked about his company's experience of embracing consumerisation and introducing a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy, governed by Mobility Management.

The discussion began with a look at the drivers for the mobility revolution, focusing in particular on the speed at which things have changed. According to independent researchers SINTEF, 90% of all the digital data available to us now has been created since 2011.

Smart mobile devices and ubiquitous connectivity have led the way in this volcanic eruption of content. But it's consumerisation that has really forced organisations to think again about their approach to network management and security.

New choices for users

Having discovered the freedom and control that mobile technologies can provide, people have started to question the value of the technology they are given for work. Once, we used the same platforms at home as we used in the office. iOS, Android, Facebook, Twitter and any number of truly user-friendly interfaces have changed all that. Now, users feel they have a choice, and they prefer their own technology.

Apps in particular have highlighted the weaknesses of the productivity tools we got so used to working with. Having discovered quick, intuitive and elegantly-engineered ways of completing simple tasks like calendar updates, expenses management or file sharing, users will not tolerate old-school applications that do not provide the same experience.

So the reality facing IT decision makers is that users are bringing their own devices, whether or not corporate policy allows it or the network can accommodate the exponential rise in demand for connections and bandwidth.

Go with the BYOD flow

Many organisations, especially those in highly regulated sectors such as banking and financial services, are standing firm against the creep of vulnerable consumer technologies. But others are finding it more cost-effective to go with the proliferating flow and then take steps to secure and control their new, more fluid and distributed infrastructures.

The rewards can be considerable for those who embrace the trend. In simple financial terms, consumerisation means spending less on corporate devices. Some organisations are now seriously considering the idea of doing away with laptops and giving new starters the option of taking company-issued tablets and smartphones, or bringing their own.

Cultural impact

Decisions like this extend the technology debate beyond the IT team and into functions such as HR and even into the boardroom – the so-called 'C-suite'. The HR team may need to advise on the needs and expectations of each particular role, which may determine the type and specification of the devices to be issued.

For the C-suite, the question is one of culture. Devices and apps are only two of the many elements of mobility that need managing. It is the behaviour of the people and the way performance is measured that really start to change the working environment and open up the opportunities that flow from mobility. But a true move to a mobile culture has to be led from the top.

Wherever the demand comes from, the most intriguing question around Mobility Management currently confronting IT decision makers is: what next? Given the speed at which things have changed already, picking the next step in the mobile revolution is a real leap of faith.

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Devices: whatever next?

The Blue Door debate dwelt for some time on the next generation of devices, including wearables and the ability of tablets to replace laptops as the standard office communications and productivity tool. The only reasonable certainty is that users, not vendors or employers, will dictate the trend.

With so many alternative reference points to show users what's possible these days, traditional enterprise applications – and IT departments – will have to evolve the way they work. Given that institutions such as banks can offer quick, rewarding user experiences online, there is little chance that users will put up with having to connect via cumbersome VPNs to work with archaic user interfaces.

This is also a critical factor for recruitment. Graduates are making employment choices based on the technologies they are offered to work with, and the attitude of the candidate organisation to bring-your-own.

Rather than having to re-engineer complex enterprise apps, many IT teams are working with specialist providers to develop hybrid apps that deliver user-friendly access to the applications from mobile devices. These hybrids are hosted in the cloud, which allows them to be deployed across diverse operating systems and devices.

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Low-risk experiments

Another way to approach the future for enterprise mobility is to appoint a dedicated group of workers to experiment with the different options. They can try a variety of alternative technologies and working practices to find a combination that works, without exposing the whole of the organisation to the risks involved in a trial.

Even with these manageable ways forward, user expectations may still be accelerating ahead of what the technology makes possible. Managed Mobility usually involves the organisation taking some control over the user's own device, often with some form of partition solution to separate and secure personal and corporate apps and content.

But this approach still requires users to switch between their personal and corporate 'personas', whereas in the real world the lines between work and home life are increasingly blurred. There may soon come a time when devices can detect the kinds of tasks users are performing and automatically regulate what they are allowed to do, in the context of other tasks they may have just completed.



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The business case

For any organisation exploring the possibilities of Managed Mobility, the fundamental considerations are still the questions of security, control and, above all, the business case. Decisions about the extent to which organisations adopt consumerisation must be shaped by the commercial benefits it can deliver.

And these can be considerable. One leading online CRM provider reports a sales increase of 24% following the introduction of a bring-your-own policy. Employee satisfaction increased by 43%.

Cases like these demonstrate that Managed Mobility is not simply a defence against network threats, or a way of regulating non-standard devices. In the age of the consumer-led digital revolution, it's a business enabler that can create competitive advantage and embed agile, more flexible working at the heart of corporate culture.



To find out more about strategies and solutions for Managed Mobility, and to discuss any of the topics covered here, please contact your account manager or go to o2.co.uk/enterprise

