Is CYOD is better than BYOD?

Choose Your Own Device (CYOD) should be considered over Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), however, it is way more than just another trend. That's because CYOD is doing what BYOD never could - putting control of business data firmly back into the hands of the organisation, meeting employees' functional needs and catering to their all-important aesthetic sensibilities.

George Lodewick

Says George Lodewick, Dell commercial Product Specialist at Drive Control Corporation (DCC): "Smartphones, tablet PCs, laptops and other electronic devices have become indispensable productivity and communications tools for business. However, BYOD, where employees use their personal devices for work, introduces a number of risks to the business. CYOD lets the business take back control, letting users choose from a range of suitable devices that are fully managed and that comply with business security policies."

There is a lot that has discouraged businesses from embracing BYOD. If the device belongs to the employee, business cannot dictate security standards, what the device can be used for, or what applications can be downloaded. If the device is misplaced or stolen, company data on the mobile device becomes vulnerable. In addition, if the user is simply given a budget and allowed to select their own device, they are compelled to return the device to the commercial retailer when the device needs to be serviced, potentially exposing sensitive data to the retailer's repair value chain.

Notes Llewellyn Chame, Mobility Specialist at Dell: "BYOD adoption has been hindered by the complexity it introduces. IT managers simply do not have the time to support all these disparate devices, nor can businesses condone the level of risk in terms of data theft or loss, or introduction of viruses to their internal networks through these devices. At the same time, advances in devices, such as Solid State Drives (SSDs), increase in memory capacity and increasingly sleek design, make them desirable and useful productivity devices. CYOD thus offers compelling benefits."

Review current policies

Says Lodewick: "If considering CYOD, companies should review their current policies with regard to allowing staff to use personal devices for work, identify the security gap, and create a strategy in terms of benefits, allocation of devices and management of devices.

"A smart way to manage the introduction of CYOD devices into the business is to assess job responsibilities and roles, the applications used by employees, the type of use each device is likely to be put to, and whether a device is suited to company security and risk management requirements. A range of devices with different styling but similar capacity and functionality can then be selected for each defined use requirement. This will give users the opportunity to exercise their personal preference in selecting a device, helping ensure the device is used productively."

Different categories of employees will want different devices. The corporate power user may want a high capacity, slick and light device. For the sales force, workhorse mobility may be important; while "nine to fivers" who may only occasionally have to work after hours may need a standard device for ad hoc work. For each category, high, medium and low-end devices that meet business needs might be identified.

Says Chame: "The key elements to consider for device selection include ease of deployment and management, their ability to enable business continuity, and affordability. For example, hybrid devices that give users the functionality of a tablet PC and laptop may be suitable for executives, Ultrabooks may suit power users, while tablet PCs and smartphones may be suitable for other categories of users."

Notes Lodewick: "Businesses following a CYOD strategy would acquire a select range of devices via a reseller. As security protocols are usually set up on a Windows server, the Operating System (OS) of the devices would also be an important selection criterion. By using a single trusted supplier, they are able to negotiate control of service and repair value chains, ensuring devices are subject to onsite warrantee or vendor repair according to corporate policy."

CYOD resolves the tension between the introductions of risk to the business, attaining the benefits the use of these devices provides the organisation, and the user's demand for personal choice. "We believe it's really the way businesses will choose to deal with the use of electronic devices in the future," says Lodewick. "It's the smart choice."