

Critical tools for supporting the mobile enterprise of the future



By [Russel Brand](#)

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Smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices have become essential tools in the business world of today. However...

As ICT has evolved and the mobile workforce has become increasingly ubiquitous, mobility itself has grown and changed, and is fast becoming a tool for the execution of business processes as well.

As mobility becomes ever more commoditised, the variety of mobile devices that need to be supported continues to expand, presenting organisations with a challenge. Supporting the mobile enterprise of the future requires a stable platform to enable organisations to take full advantage of the competitive edge mobility delivers, both now and in the future.

Mobile technology is becoming entrenched in the business processes of the modern organisation, enabling business to become decentralised and more responsive to the needs of their customers. The mobile enterprise can also help organisations to put more information into the hands of knowledge workers, when and where they need it, assisting companies to align more closely to its own operations, logistics, planning and execution. Ultimately, the benefit of the mobile enterprise lies in its ability to close the gap between an organisation and its customers, and between the various aspects of the organisation itself, creating a proactive 'zero distance' environment. This makes the business more agile, and ultimately more profitable and sustainable as a result.

Mobility becomes a critical tool

Mobility has evolved from a tool that enabled the workforce to conduct certain tasks outside of the office, to become a critical tool for executing core business processes whenever and wherever necessary. This further drives zero distance between organisations and its customers. However, as mobile devices have become essential to business functioning, the management of these devices has become increasingly critical.

In addition, one of the biggest challenges that arises from the need to incorporate mobile devices into the organisation is loss of data. These mobile devices are being used to handle, process and store highly sensitive data, and while traditional computing comes with a general understanding of the importance of securing data, the mindset of the mobile user is not yet geared towards mitigating this risk.

According to research sponsored by Intel and conducted by the Ponemon Institute, the average value of a lost laptop is US\$49,246, with the occurrence of a data breach representing 80% of this cost, and the majority of the remaining cost resulting from a loss of intellectual property. Mobile viruses are also on the increase, again resulting in loss or theft of data

and potentially attaching themselves to corporate networks and creating further data loss or destruction.

The abuse of privileges with regard to mobile devices linked to corporate networks is another issue that needs to be carefully managed. The growth of the Bring Your Own Device trend also presents its own challenges alongside this, as organisations need to be able to deliver a uniform user experience and access to all necessary documents and data for all employees across all devices, regardless of the operating system used or the physical location of the user. According to Ovum, 57.1% of all full time employees are using a personal smartphone or tablet to access corporate data, and that almost 80% of BYOD activity remains unmanaged, creating unnecessary risk for organisations embracing the BYOD trend.

Managing devices remotely

Two interlinked technologies offer the solution to these challenges. Mobile Device Management (MDM) is designed to offer the toolsets required to provision mobile devices, manage these devices remotely, deliver standardised security policies and control access to applications on mobile devices within the enterprise, amongst other management and administrative tasks. Working in tandem with this, Mobile Workforce Management (MWM) is designed to provide a virtualised environment that enables organisations to provision a standardised desktop and systems across any and all devices, including smartphones and tablets.

MDM delivers functionality to enable organisations to successfully manage and mitigate the risk of mobility in the corporate environment. One of the core components is the ability to set and enforce standardised security policies on all mobile devices across the enterprise. This aids in preventing access to unauthorised applications, as well as in ensuring that anti-virus solutions are in place on mobile devices and that data security protocols are followed effectively.

Delivering a consistent user experience

MDM also provides the functionality to manage mobile devices remotely, and alongside this, the ability to remotely 'wipe' the devices and render it unusable in the event that it is lost or stolen. This ensures that sensitive company information does not fall into the wrong hands, protecting the integrity of the organisation's data. MWM also enables organisations to securely provision devices, push applications to devices and manage user access.

Once these management capabilities are in place, organisations are then able to take advantage of MWM functionality to deliver a consistent user experience across the organisation, regardless of device, operating system or user location. Cloud-based virtualisation ensures a standard interface, and linking into this, Cloud-based storage ensures that no sensitive data is stored locally on the mobile devices themselves, further enhancing security around mobility.

Mobility is an integral part of maintaining competitiveness for the enterprise of the future and in creating closer proximity and zero distance between organisations and their customers. Management tools such as MDM and MWM are essential in ensuring that organisations can leverage the benefits of this trend, without falling foul of the security concerns surrounding mobility and the mobile enterprise.

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