

Five challenges for enterprise mobility in 2015

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In recent years there has been an increase in the business orientation of IT. No longer does IT work in a silo, thinking narrowly in terms of infrastructure and capabilities. The modern IT leader takes a business-first approach to technology decisions: What business strategies, initiatives and practices do we need to empower, and what's the best way to do it?



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Ideally, IT would inform its strategy based on discussions at the highest level of the business-but first, we have to earn that seat at the table by showing that we can keep up. When a business leader talks about ramping up an offshore workforce overnight, or providing access to a bank's financial systems from iPads in the hands of roaming employees, or attracting top talent with a more consumer-style work experience, they should be able to take it for granted that the answer from IT will be 'yes'. But most organisations aren't quite there yet.

There are major challenges to be addressed before IT becomes truly transparent to the business.

As you develop your mobility strategy in the year ahead, make sure you've got a plan for each of the following five areas.

1. The device explosion

The number of business devices continues to grow in number and in diversity. At the same time, employee choice is rapidly evolving from an interesting idea to an essential part of corporate life.

Whatever you want to call it - bring your own device, (BYOD), choose your own device (CYOD), company-owned, personally enabled (COPE) or just the non-sanctioned use of personal technology-your organisation will have to deal with the device explosion and the issues it raises. How will you maintain security across a heterogeneous mix of devices of varying ownership? How will you protect corporate data when it resides on the same device as personal data, and vice versa? How will you provide secure access to corporate networks on any device people use, without raising roadblocks to productivity and satisfaction? How will you make registration seamless so people can focus on their work without jumping through a lot of hoops first?

2. The app migration

New-world application types like web, mobile and SaaS continue to emerge and their use increases as they assist enterprises to empower people in more ways, on more devices, in more places - but we've also got billions of dollars invested in traditional Windows applications.

It's easy to dismiss these old-world apps as 'legacy systems' bound for obsolescence, but the fact is that they still have a critical role to play. In order to extend their value and bridge them into a new era, we need to mobilise them to

co-exist with newer apps built from the ground up for business mobility. What needs to be delivered today is a device on which the old-world apps appear side-by-side with new-world apps, with the same great experience.

3. Security and accountability for everything, everywhere

Life was simple when everything was locked down and standardised - but it was a lot less interesting and productive. We can do so much more with the more open, heterogeneous environment that's emerged over the past few years, but it also means refactoring our approach to security and accountability across a portfolio of both legacy and modern apps, data and services.

We now need to ensure data privacy in a world where mixed personal and corporate data reside on multiple devices for each user, and manage access control to both apps and data for the same user across multiple devices. Ensuring compliance is critical. There is an ever-growing list of security and privacy-related standards, regulations and laws - more than 300 worldwide at last count, encompassing more than 3500 specific controls, that need to be met and we have to do all of this in a way that doesn't obstruct, confuse or annoy people trying to get work done.

Some examples of these regulations in South Africa include the Electronic Communications and Transaction Act (ECT) and the Financial Intelligence Centre Act (FICA). International regulations include acts such as Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) and the Basel II Accord.

4. A transformed workforce

As the enterprise workforce expands across generations and geographies, we need new ways to meet their expectations. Gen X has already pushed the level of technological sophistication in the workplace far beyond their predecessors; now Gen Y brings new preferred ways of working, including modern apps and a consumer-style, self-service IT experience.

The ongoing search for the ultimate enterprise app store is an important part of this, letting people self-provision the apps they need on any device they choose. At the same time, we need to be able to empower people wherever they work, whether on a corporate campus, at home, in transit or on the other side of the world.

5. Change as a constant

Change is no longer a temporary transition between long-term steady states - organisations today remain in a state of flux, shifting work and resources fluidly across locations, business units, partners and service providers to meet the demands of dynamic global markets. For IT, move-add-change processes must be streamlined to become routine aspects of daily life, not exceptional disruptions. 'Don't own stuff' is the new mantra, as the cloud provides the elasticity and flexibility to transform the IT environment, ramp up outsourced talent, reshape the organisation, integrate mergers and acquisitions, provide burst capacity, wind down initiatives and more in a matter of hours - not months -

with ease and efficiency.

One theme running through each of these challenges is the need to build security into your business mobility strategy so that no matter how or where people work, which types of apps they use, or which devices they choose, your organisation remains secure and in compliance.

2015 is going to be a pivotal year for IT. I can't wait to see how different the conversations are a year from now - as IT accelerates its orientation to business.

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