The new mobile order

Consumerization of IT presents a wealth of business opportunities for IT management.

Call it the iPhone effect. More than ever, IT is feeling the pressure to allow users to access sensitive corporate data via their personal mobile phones. Employees want the flexibility to use applications such as enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), e-mail and instant messaging not only from within the workplace, but at any time from any device. Yet, with so much at stake, including network security and customer privacy, IT has been slow to bow.

Although this might seem like a good, corporate-minded strategy, what IT holdouts are missing is that, much like previous technology waves, these personal devices are actually a godsend for productivity and collaboration. Think back to the early days of other "bottom-up" technologies such as PCs and Palm Pilots. At first they were considered a threat to the enterprise, and now they are considered essential business tools.

The same evolution is under way for personal mobile devices. Already organizations of all sizes are taking advantage of anytime, anywhere access; Web services; and social networking features to boost employee collaboration, improve customer service and speed decision-making. Therefore, if IT views device usage as corporate devices only, you'll be perceived as standing in the way of revenue and taking away what could be the organization's competitive edge.

It's essential that IT get ahead of the trend so you can facilitate these benefits yet still protect data by incorporating parameters for usage into network management and security plans.

This message is crystal-clear at Lawrence General Hospital in Lawrence, Mass. "At first we resisted the use of personal mobile devices, thinking we were too small a shop to support them," says Kevin Williams, technical director of Information Systems at the 1,600-employee hospital. Then the IT team started to see the business advantages, including the ability to give caregivers instant access to critical information, and not only started allowing them but, in some cases, even encouraging their use.

For example, nurse-managers use consumer-grade mobile devices to access a key application that shows the availability of beds throughout the hospital. Rather than having to return to their desktops to find this information, they can stay "in the field" to efficiently and cost-effectively direct the transfer of patients from the emergency room to wards.

If you can't beat 'em, join 'em

Had Williams stuck his head into the sand and objected to the use of these devices, Lawrence General Hospital would have missed a significant opportunity. In fact, in a recent Market Pulse Study conducted by IDG Research Services for Sybase, 33 percent of the respondents said that slowness of decision-making due to limited access to business-critical information is a downside of not mobilizing employees.

Other downsides respondents reported include loss of productivity (34 percent), a decrease in employee

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satisfaction (34 percent) and business opportunities missed due to lack of access to real-time enterprise data (24 percent). Some said they risk slowing the velocity of decision-making because employees wouldn't have real-time access to workflow systems for time-sensitive processes such as purchase order approvals. In addition, there could be miscommunication with customers due to lack of visibility into inventory and account information.

These are all unacceptable outcomes in a cutthroat economy. "Mobility is no longer a 'nice to have' feature; rather, it is considered a strategic component of business. Deploying mobile applications provides strong productivity improvements and offers better customer touch for the mobile workers accessing these applications in the field, whether they are salespeople, knowledge workers or field workers," says IDC analyst Stephen Drake in "Embracing Next-Generation Mobile Platforms to Solve Business Problems" (IDC, October 2008).

Drake adds that such applications go beyond e-mail and include leveraging CRM system information across multiple user types, deploying asset tracking and resource management and delivering mobilized forms.

New directions: The consumerization of IT

You may just be wrapping your mind around how to support e-mail, calendaring, contacts and perhaps the occasional enterprise resource planning (ERP) application on mobile devices, but get ready. There is a whole wave of consumer-like functionality you'll need to manage.

According to a recent Market Pulse Survey conducted by IDG Research Services for Sybase, 39 percent of the respondents said they are deploying mobile applications with more consumer-like functionality, such as social media and Web 2.0 services, than in the past.

Just over 25 percent are designing mobile applications that take greater advantage of native device capabilities such as cameras and GPS. A quarter of the respondents are so convinced about these tools that they are shifting away from packaged applications to rely instead on custom-developed mobile applications that support these features.

For instance, if during a customer meeting, a salesperson is asked about a product road map he is unfamiliar with, he can use social networking to quickly find answers. He can tag the question to find a subject matter expert, check that person's availability and immediately incorporate that person into the conversation. By responding so quickly, he is able to keep the customer engaged and hopefully close the sale.

IT can also couple the device's GPS to the company's CRM system so that executives and sales teams can locate nearby customers to visit during their travel downtime.

Some companies are even getting excited about offering Facebook, wikis and other social networking tools to their employees via mobile devices to improve and hasten collaboration and customer interaction.

Finally, sales and marketing teams can use their device cameras to snap pictures of billboards, hard-copy magazines and other advertisements to be injected into the CRM database as competitive intelligence.

To ensure that regulatory and corporate restrictions are being enforced among these next-generation tools, companies will need device management platforms such as Sybase's mobility management software. With Sybase products, IT can either set policies to guide usage or block application usage where necessary. For instance, some companies do not allow cameras in their facilities. IT could dispatch a policy to a user's phone to comply with this rule, still allowing safe use of the mobile device.

Such a management platform will enable IT to say "yes" to social networking, cameras, GPS and other tools that are sure to spark innovation and generate revenue.

Let Diversity Reign

Agreement with statements regarding the support of handheld mobile devices

Our organization feels it is important to support multiple handheld mobile device types in order to provide expected mobile functionality to employees

| 23% | 36% | 18% | 14% | 9% |
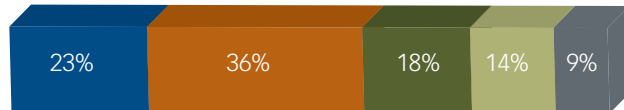
Our organization feels it is important to support personal handheld mobile device types in order to provide expected mobile functionality to employees

| 27% | 32% | 14% | 10% | 16% |
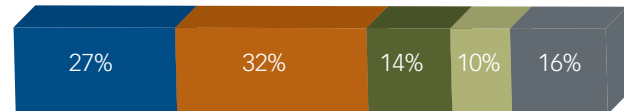
■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Source: IDG Research, Sept 2009

Already, as the IDG Research Services study found, nearly a third of the respondents (32 percent) currently use handheld mobility technology in their daily job. Another 39 percent expect to use it in their daily jobs within the next 12 to 18 months. And it's not just IT and top executives finding uses for mobile devices. In the study, 35 percent of the respondents said all groups in the organization are putting pressure on IT to adopt handheld mobility solutions.

With such a diverse base of users, it's not surprising that 59 percent of those surveyed strongly or somewhat agreed that their organization finds it important to support multiple mobile handheld device types. More interestingly, 59 percent strongly or somewhat agreed that their organization finds it important to support personal handheld devices.

The ubiquitous workplace

There are several drivers for these strong numbers. Younger and more tech-savvy employees, often referred to as "millennials," have grown up with this technology and expect it to be readily available to them. Most employees already use some type of mobile device in their personal lives. Lastly, more and more companies are expecting their workers to be available when they are out of the office.
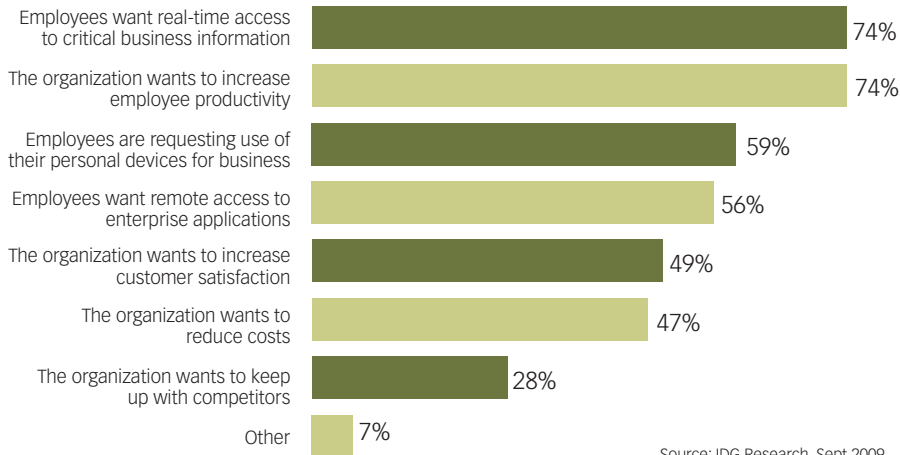
All of these factors combine to make mobile handheld

devices a necessity, and therefore IT must support them.

"What IT has to realize is that even if you say 'no' to this technology, someone higher up than you is eventually going to say 'yes,' so it's up to you to understand the value and then set users' expectations and limits," Lawrence General's Williams says.

The IDG Research Services study found that, indeed, 60 percent of respondents were focused on the benefits of workforce mobilization, versus 33 percent that were stuck worrying about the challenges. It's the forward-thinking companies that have seen benefits across the organization, including among IT, executive management, field service delivery and repair technicians, sales, operations, marketing and customer service. They've seen a positive impact on employee collaboration and productivity, real-time access to critical business information and employee satisfaction. They've also witnessed reduced costs, faster decision-making and improved customer satisfaction.

Lawrence General's Williams experienced the last three with the mobile bed availability application alone. "Hospitals are very concerned about how many times you can turn a bed over. Giving the nurse-manager access to a mobile application results in beds being opened up 15 minutes faster throughout the day, and that adds up over time," he says.

Primary Drivers Behind Handheld Mobility Initiatives

Employees want real-time access to critical business information — 74%

The organization wants to increase employee productivity — 74%

Employees are requesting use of their personal devices for business — 59%

Employees want remote access to enterprise applications — 56%

The organization wants to increase customer satisfaction — 49%

The organization wants to reduce costs — 47%

The organization wants to keep up with competitors — 28%

Other — 7%

Source: IDG Research, Sept 2009

At Amica Insurance, mobile access has helped speed the claims process. Adjusters can now receive their assignments over the air and upload pictures and report data directly to the claims system. "This provides much faster turnaround for customers and has helped our workers become much more productive," says Larry Brown, senior systems engineer. He says the company has seen a 27 percent increase in assignments per year, which translates into 235 additional appraisals per year.

Dominion Enterprises, a 5,800-employee marketing services firm, is also enjoying tremendous benefits from supporting handheld technology. It has a raft of network and systems administrators that keeps tabs on the infrastructure that supports the company's 24x7 Web site and Web services. These technicians require more than just status updates via their mobile devices; they also need IT capabilities. "The smartphones are being used to monitor the health of all our systems and, in some cases, to actually run jobs and manipulate those systems. For instance, database engineers will remotely run a job to rebuild indexes," says Joe Fuller, Dominion CIO and vice president.

Looking ahead, Fuller expects to offer mobile CRM

access to sales managers, sales representatives and business managers. "They will want to use their smartphones to look at where they are in the sales process," he says. In addition, he wants to offer them business intelligence views from the handhelds.

With promise comes challenge

As plentiful as these mobile benefits are, IT is instinctively correct to be wary of mobile technology. After all, if there is a data breach, compliance issues or other network security concerns, the onus will fall on IT. In addition, managing multiple platforms and devices can quickly turn into a staffing and budget nightmare.

The way most IT teams reduce this risk is to pick one or two platforms to support. Williams says this is a flawed strategy, because users don't want to use a device they're unfamiliar with, so they get frustrated. That results in low adoption rates and a blow to the return on your investment. In addition, some applications work better on specific devices. He has found that the bed availability program is best suited to the iPhone, for instance.

Although the hospital is highly flexible in what it will support, Williams is keenly aware of HIPAA and other privacy regulations that he must ensure are followed. Therefore, he believes that IT teams should deploy a mobile enterprise platform that can manage security, configurations and applications on a myriad of devices.

Sybase's mobility management solution supports this mission by providing organizations with a cohesive way to centrally manage company-issued and employee-owned devices so that they are up-to-date, reliable and secure. Sybase's Afaria software supports a host of

Measuring up:
Soft metrics, firm ROI

Often the best way to gauge the success of a technology rollout is to generate a report based on prepackaged metrics. These metrics will track the most-tangible benefits. But some of the more powerful and valuable benefits are often the less tangible ones, so be on the lookout for these as well. Here are some tips:

■ **Start small, and look for tangible improvements.** At Amica Insurance, senior systems engineer Larry Brown was able to quantify his mobile device investment. For instance, because the technology enabled workers to send and receive data in the field, they were able to increase same-day inspections by 265 percent. This capability also has led to a decrease in claim cycle time from 3.3 days to 2.4 days, a 24 percent increase. With this information, he figured out a project ROI of only six months.

■ **Observe your users.** Sometimes it won't be easy to do that kind of tallying. Instead, you might have to observe improvements. For example, at Lawrence General Hospital, Information Systems Technical Director Kevin Williams says nurses are able to collaborate better by having mobile access to patient bed information. They don't have to spend time tracking each other down to find answers to questions. Although Williams may not be able to put an exact number on that, he says the mobile access leads to improved patient and family satisfaction, better patient care and increased patient throughput. "You can't measure that monetary improvement directly, but you can measure such things as reduced wait times, shorter time to decision, less time for transport and more beds turned over in a given period of time," he says.

■ **Solicit feedback from customers.** Imagine that a repairman can solve a problem onsite by using a mobile video instruction library or a salesperson can quickly check inventory for a specific product while the customer is still engaged. Both of these scenarios will likely result in increased customer satisfaction. Therefore, you should be sure to gather customer opinions and share them with executives as proof that mobile technology is positively affecting your organization.

platforms and provides IT with a full inventory and status update on Windows Mobile, Windows CE, Windows Notebooks, Apple iPhone, RIM BlackBerry, Palm OS and Symbian devices.

IT can update applications and data as needed, manage and secure the mobile environment by groups and devices and perform over-the-air software distribution. Sybase technology provides data-at-rest encryption, complex passwords, backup, restore and device lockdown. For example, if a user loses a device, IT can immediately wipe it clean. Or you can enact a policy that deletes sensitive data if there is more than a certain number of password attempts.

In the past, users would balk at using their own devices, because they would have to agree that if the device was lost or compromised, all their data and configurations would be erased. Using Sybase technology, IT can specify that only certain data and applications be deleted.

In addition, companies can rely on Sybase's mobility platform to simply and quickly build applications that connect business data to mobile workers on any device, at any time. Built on proven, industry-leading technology, Sybase Unwired Platform addresses the challenge of creating and managing multiple mobile applications that securely connect a variety of heterogeneous back-end data sources to all major device types.

Conclusion: Embrace the consumerization of IT

There's no doubt that mobility offers businesses significant opportunities. It's also a reality that as more millennials enter the workforce, IT will be expected to support a range of personal devices. Therefore, you must adopt an enterprise platform that enables you to secure and manage these devices in a way that allows for flexibility but also respects compliance and other data protection policies.

Visit **sybase.com/mobility** for more information.