Enterprise Mobility Deployment: Strategic Readiness and How to Get Deployment Right

There's more to deployment than simply handing out mobile devices to your employees. A lot of thought – not to mention time and effort – needs to go into ensuring that new mobile devices are usable. Configuring and securing a device for corporate use, loading it with relevant apps and managing updates requires know-how and time that most employees just don't have. Getting it right (the first time!) helps keep support costs low and employee morale high.

SUMMARY

Industry
All industries

Product
Mobile devices including computers, tablets and smartphones

Region
All regions

Typical Applications
Enterprise Mobility Development Strategy and Planning

Customer Benefits
Roll out mobile devices in a strategic way

Keep support costs low and employee morale high during deployments

Don't boil the ocean

Sure, there are occasions when you absolutely have to get a device into a user's hands immediately, but that's certainly not the ideal situation. Pressure from both management and employees to rush the deployment process shouldn't keep you from maintaining a phased approach. Even those who yell the loudest would be better off waiting until you have a deployment framework in place and can roll out devices in a strategic way.

Measured rollouts give you a better sense of adoption, use and the impact of increased mobility on your help desk. By keeping your focus on where you can increase productivity and gain business advantage, you'll be able to stay ahead of the game and foster smart spending.

The devil is in the details

After you've determined the best strategy for your deployment, you'll need to be sure that your devices are truly ready to go. Correctly configuring and securing devices is key to a successful deployment. Your employees should be able to unpack their devices and use them, right out of the box.

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Settings. Most companies choose to use a mobile device management (MDM) solution to handle the lion's share of configuration and management. These solutions are great, but not every setting can be enforced through them. In some cases, you may need to write customized scripts to standardize settings across devices.

Apps. Deployment doesn't just apply to devices. As part of your deployment, you may need to look into code signing (validating the source and authenticity of the software code), app wrapping (applying a management layer to your mobile app), and containerization (encrypting enterprise apps and separating them from personal ones).

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Unique needs. Not all devices fit all user needs. You may have some departments, job roles or individuals who need something different. In special cases, it may be necessary to personalize devices and apps for a target end user.

Documentation. Like any part of your technology infrastructure, it's important to document how you're handling all aspects of your mobile environment. Institutionalizing the knowledge that you've gained throughout the process will ensure that nobody has to reinvent the wheel when changes need to be made.

Accessorize!

Remember, your employees need more than just the devices themselves. Think ahead about the right cables, adaptors and any other power accessories that employees may need for their devices. Beyond power, users may also need screen protectors, cases, vehicle mounts, etc. Making these decisions now will help you take advantage of economies of scale when purchasing.

Stick together

Mobile devices can be major productivity boosters, as long as they work properly. Because downtime on a mobile device can be even more concerning than downtime on an office computer, many companies empower their employees to take action. During deployment, IT staff apply stickers on corporate mobile devices so that employees will know how to get support. Immediately knowing what to do in case of a device failure or issue can make a real difference, especially for field and sales employees in situations when time is of the essence.

Key Deployment Considerations

- Do you have support from all business areas – including finance, business users, IT, project managers – and are they prepared for the deployment?

- Does your company have the resources and shipping expertise to do a massive deployment?

- Will this project take resources (especially IT) away from typical roles and responsibilities? If so, how will you address those concerns?

- Does your company have the technical knowledge to get the devices activated and to troubleshoot them?

- Do you have a plan in place for handling dead-on-arrival devices?

Circumstantial evidence: For when measured rollouts aren't an option

A measured, controlled rollout of corporate devices sounds pretty good, doesn't it? Unfortunately, today's rapidly changing business landscape can make that idyllic scenario impossible. Whether it's a deployment fire drill or a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) quagmire, you'll likely have to think beyond the plan when it comes to mobile deployments.

The need for speed

You do what you can to plan ahead, strategize and have a mobile deployment framework in place to cover any eventuality. Inevitably, plans change, executives make snap decisions, teams need devices in a hurry, and you're put in a tough position: meet the short-term needs of the business and cause yourself a lot of grief, or deny the request and stick to your plan. Maybe there's a meeting coming up soon where thousands of field salespeople will be in one place, and the sales manager wants to roll out devices all at once. Maybe there's a new initiative that your HR department needs to support that requires immediate use of tablets. Sometimes the customers – in this case, your business users – have to be right, and you're in a position where you need to accommodate.

The perils of rapid deployment

If you're pressured into a rapid deployment scenario, be as prepared as possible. To start, make sure that you have access to the equipment you need. Be warned: Most new mobile device models aren't available in larger quantities. For example, it's tough to get your hands on thousands of the latest iPhones until they've been on the market for a while. The same may be true for accessories and other items that are crucial to your deployment.

Working within a tight timeline may also require you to bump up your staffing levels, and you may want to consider running multiple shifts to handle the additional volume. Also consider the physical space you'll be working in: Do you have enough room to sit down and configure many devices at once? Do you have enough outlets to plug in large quantities of devices at the same time? Put some quality control procedures in place so that you know your team is properly handling configuration and its various steps. In many scenarios, it may be possible to use barcode labels to automate input and reduce the chance of human error.

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Self-service?

Perhaps your company has started down the BYOD path, which means that you have a more limited role in deployment. Yet you may not be completely absolved from deployment-related issues; many companies that have BYOD programs still assist their employees in the purchasing process to make sure that only relevant devices are joined to the corporate network. It's not uncommon for companies to identify a set of devices that qualify as part of their BYOD programs. While you can't obligate employees to invest in one specific device, you can encourage them to buy preferred devices by offering some type of incentive or reimbursement.

Plenty of device manufacturers and resellers have programs that help companies implement their BYOD initiatives. These programs can include tailored e-commerce websites that offer BYOD-qualified devices, campaign materials, custom pricing for your employees, discounts and promotions, and a range of payment options.

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The special sauce: How to make mobility a long-term success

Technology projects have multiple aspects that go into making them viable. Mobile deployments are no different. If you want to achieve the productivity and return-on-investment (ROI) gains that mobility can offer, you'll have to consider the entire deployment process – and beyond – before embarking on a rollout.

Buy now and save!

Getting the right purchasing plan in place might be the first step in a successful mobile deployment. There are lots of options for procuring devices, from working with resellers (most common when purchasing rugged devices) to buying direct from an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) or mobile operator. Shop around for the best options and pricing.

Decide in advance if you want to purchase devices that are locked or unlocked. If it doesn't matter to you, then buying a locked phone may make it easier to secure the device. Plus, it

can be difficult to ascertain whether your optimal devices are available in unlocked form. That said, buying unlocked devices gives you more choices when it comes to mobile operators, and it can be helpful for companies that have employees who travel internationally.

App testing

You already know that handing out devices without proper configuration doesn't make for smart business. Make sure the apps that your company uses are also ready to go on the devices before you distribute them. Conduct tests to see that apps are properly connected to any back-end systems, that they're storing data appropriately and securely, and that all the permissions are configured so that your employees can easily log on and access what they need to be productive.

If you have a BYOD program and support a range of platforms and devices, you may find that app testing can quickly become complicated and costly. Use logs to discover which devices, platforms and operating system versions are in use within your BYOD population, and start by catering to the largest percentages. You may want to run tests on both older and newer device models to really see what works.

Keep up to date

Even after your devices have been disseminated, you can't sit back and relax. Those devices and the apps on them will need regular updates. If you're using an MDM or mobile application management (MAM) solution (or, better yet, a combination of the two), those updates will be easier to handle because they can be centrally managed. You'll also have the ability to blacklist rogue apps that pop up after deployment.

Tag – you're it!

One of the troubles with mobile devices is that they're, well, mobile, which means that they can easily wander off and become lost. Many companies keep a handle on roaming devices through asset tagging, in which each device gets a unique ID number that's recorded in a central database. It's possible to add radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to your asset tracking system to help locate devices.

Cover your assets

Even if they're tagged, it can be tough to track all those mobile devices, especially if you have a BYOD program. Proper asset management is key to maintaining your mobility investment. There are plenty of asset management systems out there that will provide you with reports about general inventory, which user

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has which device, how many licenses you have and when they expire, your wireless usage, device histories and so forth. With this information at your fingertips, you'll be able to control costs and plan for future investments.

The maintenance window

You strive to avoid downtime with your mobile devices, but it does happen. Finding a fast way to repair or replace devices calls for comprehensive depot services. Companies can either establish their own mobile device depot or rely on an outsourcing partner to deliver depot services. Either way, employees with problematic devices will receive an immediate replacement and can get right back to work.

Think globally

If you have an international company, you'll need to do a bit of additional planning when taking on a mobile device deployment. For instance, if you're purchasing your devices from a single source, make sure that those devices are equipped for all the languages your employees need. You'll also need to find a mobility service provider that can handle your global scale. You'll want a partner that can provide comprehensive wireless

coverage and that also can offer additional services that aren't platform-specific and that don't just skim the surface but truly provide full care for your mobile environment.

So long, farewell

Sad to say, at some point, your devices will reach the end of their usable lives. When that happens, you need to have a plan in place for how to dispose of them. If you've leased the devices, it's an easy path: You'll hand over your old devices and, most likely, sign up to receive new ones.

If you did not lease your devices, you'll need to properly retire or securely destroy them. Some companies provide disposal services that offer a partial refund for equipment that still has value. If your devices are no longer worth anything, look for green recycling programs or, if necessary, secure destruction, where devices are either shredded or wiped using a government-approved standard.

Need help with **strategic mobility planning** or getting your **mobile apps decisions** in order? We've got you covered.

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