

Maximizing Business Value from Mobile App Projects

The Results of Mobile-Enabling a Workforce

Over the last several years, surveys have consistently shown that organizations see concrete benefits as they mobile-enable their workforce. A recent Azzurri Communications survey indicates that 93% of organizations were able to measure productivity gains, half of them substantial. This same study indicates that 71% of responders predict that they will experience even more value down the road.

Additionally, almost 2 out of 3 responders replied that their staff who are using their mobile devices while on the move are doing more than just sharing information, interacting through email, or accessing company data—they're also creating content.

As IT further enables their stakeholders, the use of mobile devices continues to increase across the business. The trick to optimizing each application's value is to work in close collaboration with industry professionals to identify mobile situations where the solution makes their job easier and more efficient in a meaningful way.

Of course, your partners have mobile users too, so it's no surprise that they often benefit from access to a particular set of your systems. Partners such as product suppliers, information providers or collaborators, are going to have mobile users that require access to internal or private systems. But making it happen is notably more complex. Keep in mind that IT typically doesn't manage or control the user identities of their partners' employees, which is a reality that stretches some of IT's current security practices.

The survey results show that those who can successfully capitalize on the mobility movement are seeing tangible rewards.

Common Smartphone Usage

In what has become an automatic reaction, today people routinely reach for their phone to do all sorts of things that are quite important to them:

- Connect with someone
- Learn how to get to a place
- Find information or learn how to do something
- Find the best price
- Record an artifact (meeting notes, how to instructions, configuration information, etc.) for later retrieval
- Snapshot an event (family, friends, projects, etc.)

Converting Usage to Business Gains

It's no wonder that professionals often have ideas and even a concrete understanding of how mobile devices could make their jobs easier and faster. Although not inclusive, below is a list of the common types of tasks and situations where mobile apps have made a difference. These kinds of mobile operations are where the largest productivity gains have been achieved:

- Submit field information to the corporate systems
- View or update inventory information
- Place an order
- Initiate, modify, or approve a workflow
- Enter or edit technical information
- Participate in collaboration activities



Simplify and Secure Access to Your Mobile Users



As you think about what's needed to build apps that can accomplish these kinds of activities, it may be more complicated than you expect. Although their portability expands their applicability, mobile devices are essentially PCs with a different operating system. So in addition to providing rich browser support, they're capable of running productivity and specialized enterprise tools. This wide range of capability means that just like traditional PCs, apps running on mobile devices depend on the same identity and access management (IAM) infrastructure as their predecessors. IAM enables mobile apps to deliver immediate and easy access to information data stores while keeping it secure. In a mobile enablement discussion with *InfoWorld*, Wells Fargo's VP of Corporate Technology George Lovett explains:

"There can be a perception that building a mobile app is just building out the mobile client, but the key is the integration to back-end services that enable you to have the right data and connectivity... Establishing the necessary policies, standards, processes and management tools around mobile app development also requires effort and investment."

The fundamental point that needs to be emphasized is, just like traditional applications mobile apps are just as dependent on backend services as ever before. And as the number of mobile apps multiply, the value gained from the initial IAM investment continue to pay off.

Tips for Making Mobility Compelling and Secure

1. Content is King. As you identify which business processes that you're going to enable through a mobile app, think big and broad as you map out your integration and access infrastructure. Too often each app is viewed as a tactical project, complicating each one for integrating and securing backend services. In addition to integration, it's important that developers chose an SDK (software development kit) that is supported with a robust IAM solution behind it. The IAM solution needs to protect private information while delivering access to users that are as frictionless as possible.

2. SSO across the board. Single sign-on (SSO) enables users to login once and gain access to what they need. IAM is the best



approach to getting there because it allows you to centrally navigate the complexities of diverse cloud services and backend systems.

3. Dynamic Authentication. The most effective way for you to manage risk to your business while delighting your mobile users with quick and simple application access is to take a risk-based approach. Risk-based authentication allows you to evaluate the context of the mobile access (the type of service, location, day/week, etc.) to determine how much friction the authentication should incur. Depending on business requirements, it could vary from simply delivering the service, to a multi-factor authentication experience. There may even be situations where access is blocked altogether.

4. Commit early to a single policy engine. Those that take a tactical view to their mobile app projects could find themselves with silos of authentication and access policies. Decide early not to fall into that trap. At some point IT Operations will be taking over the management of these mobile apps so you don't want it to be the result of departmental or ad-hoc projects; otherwise, they will be dealing with the overhead of redundant administration points and the vulnerability of inconsistent policies.

Doing It Right

Because we've been delivering identity and access management (IAM) solutions since their outset, our technology and expertise are among the best. With so much on the line it makes sense trust the experts.

Sources: <http://betanews.com/2014/10/20/mobile-devices-can-boost-business-productivity/>

http://resources.idgenterprise.com/original/AST-0108921_IFW_ENTERPRISE_MOBILITY_final.pdf

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