Mobilizing Your Mobile Workforce

HOW MOBILE TECHNOLOGY STRENGTHENS EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE, PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS AND CUSTOMER GROWTH

Mobile technology is a force multiplier. In fact, it's a workforce multiplier. It enables your enterprise to massively expand its domestic and global reach, strengthen customer relationships, build high value partnerships and empower your people to perform at their best.

You can accomplish far more, far more effectively with your existing talent and resources. And this is critical to your success. In today's hypercompetitive markets, the demands and expectations you face continuously rise.

You'll need new ways to increase your organization's productivity and performance. Mobile technology offers a path forward.

There are now 6 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide and 75% of the world's population has access to a mobile phone. As mobile communications, collaboration and computing become increasingly pervasive, so, too, will your organization's ability to open up new markets and expand existing ones.

To realize these gains, you'll be challenged to address performance issues in several key spheres of work, including talent management, partner management and customer relationship management. You must enable deeper, more engaging and increasingly seamless collaboration in all of these areas.

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You'll be expected to provide advanced mobile apps, tools, infrastructure and support to enable optimal workforce performance. Indeed, you'll have to put mobile technology and collaborative solutions at the forefront of your IT strategy. To be recognized as an employer of choice and an enduring growth company, you'll also have to be a fully mobilized enterprise.

MEGATRENDS IN THE MOBILE ENTERPRISE

Several megatrends and market drivers are now influencing the use, impact and potential of mobile technology in today's organizations. Among them:

The growing expectations of employees and other stakeholders. In years past, the dominant concerns with regard to mobile technology were related to access and connection. "Can you hear me now?," was not only a catchy commercial but a key issue a decade ago. More recently, employees expressed their interest in bringing their own devices to work. Now, expectations are growing again.

Employees and other stakeholders (contractors, partners, customers, etc.) are increasingly attentive to the experience associated with using their mobile devices. They recognize that their performance and success revolve around their ability to easily engage in virtual meetings and other forms of mobile collaboration. Many of the newest members of the workforce are "digital natives." Raised as a digital generation, they have particularly high expectations in terms of what their mobile devices should enable them to do—and will judge employers on their ability to support them.

Going beyond voice: the full power of smart devices. While the most common term for today's mobile devices is "smart phone," it's apparent that applications beyond voice are increasingly important. Users are relying on their devices for sophisticated and expansive access to rich data of all kinds (including video). They now have an extraordinary choice of apps to support them.

Given this trend, there's a great deal of interest in how mobile technology will support dynamic collaboration in many forms. There's interest in accessing and sharing rich forms of information that can deepen understanding, facilitate collaboration, enhance and accelerate decision-making and increase worker (and team) performance overall.

The backlash: concerns about dispersion and distraction. When Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer announced that her company was suspending its work-at-home policy and requiring employees to come back on site, many people reacted negatively and suggested her actions were backward-looking. But it's worth considering whether such a drastic policy reversal was necessary given Yahoo's low employee morale and poor market performance.

Some research suggests that organizations perform more effectively with virtual, collaborative and mobile technology when a strong foundation of trust and understanding is in place. Perhaps it was necessary for Ms. Mayer to bring her people back into close proximity to rebuild the Yahoo culture. Trust, in other words, can help address concerns about employee dispersion and distraction. Once in place, the benefits of mobility and decentralization become far more attainable.

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The front-lining of the enterprise. In his best-selling book *A Whole New Mind,* Dan Pink argued that employees tend to be more valuable when they are engaged in work that touches a customer, partner or an external stakeholder. Many office-bound tasks, he suggested, lend themselves to outsourcing or automation over time. This point of view has been echoed by corporate leaders such as GE's Jeff Immelt, who has concentrated on expanding his front office and reducing his back office in his years as CEO.

Now, with the availability of rich mobile communication, more workers can take high performing jobs on the front lines. They can engage customers while remaining connected to the home office. They can collaborate with partners in a distant location while remaining in the information loop. This phenomenon also enables organizations to expand their reach globally where some of the fastest-growing markets can be found and penetrated.

Work/life issues in the balance. Boundaries and barriers that were once relatively clear are now far less so in this age of mobile technology. Consider the recent finding that Americans spend 88 hours a week on average monitoring their mobile devices in relation to work.

Clearly, work/life boundaries are blurring. While some people are unhappy about the added stress this brings to their lives, others welcome the flexibility this trend represents. It enables them to make more little league games and dance recitals without letting a team member down.

It's critical to pay close attention to such issues if you are to attract and retain the best people in your industry and in their respective fields. You want to provide a work environment that's supportive of both their career capabilities and their personal and family goals.

ADDRESSING PERFORMANCE ISSUES IN THREE SPHERES OF WORK

When considering how today's mobile technology trends are playing out in your enterprise, it's worth keeping an eye on a few key areas where performance may be less than optimal. Three spheres of work that may be suboptimal in the absence of advanced mobile communications solutions are talent management, partner management and customer management. Let's consider these one by one:

Talent Management. You want to be an employer of choice. You want to attract and keep the best talent available. You also want to enable your people to perform at their full potential.

But a growing body of evidence suggests the top workers won't take (or stay in) jobs that fail to support their needs and expectations in terms of technology. They expect to have the

> ### Mobile technology can help optimize your business's performance in three key areas:
>
> - ### Talent management
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> - ### Partner management
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> - ### Customer management

top tools and most advanced apps available in their fields. They are particularly sensitive about having access to smart phones, tablet computers and other devices that support mobile work styles.

In the absence of appropriate support, they are unable to fully engage customers in the field and collaborate with colleagues in virtual meetings. They are also unable to effectively manage work/life balance issues to their satisfaction. Under the circumstances, the war for top talent is likely to be lost if expectations around mobility are not fully met.

Partner Management. Whether the issue is open innovation, supply chain management or partner relationship management, it's clear you must go beyond your own enterprise boundaries

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to find the allies you need to effectively go to market. You need partners to actively support you in your sales and marketing, research and development and supply and production efforts. As markets become more complex, demanding and global, active partner collaboration becomes more critical than ever. You will focus on your core competencies and they will focus on the rest.

However, partner development and management is likely to be impeded if advanced mobile communication tools, infrastructure and support are not in place. You're challenged to support access, but also security and sophisticated forms of collaboration. Partners need to be able to securely access meetings from any location at any time. And they need to be able to share rich media and content using the mobile devices of their choosing. To be agile, responsive and innovative, you need a growing array of partners. But to support those partners you must support mobility. Without a robust mobile platform, you will be unable to fully maximize your partner ecosystem.

Customer Management. So much of success today revolves around your ability to provide a powerful customer experience. To provide that experience, it's critical that your front-line brand ambassadors—be they in sales, support or some other role—are as well advised and supported as they can possibly be.

That means they need rich, collaborative access to the home office when they are in the field meeting with customers. They need to be able to use their mobile devices to gain access to the documents, resources and expertise necessary to address real-time customer demands.

Your customers also need to be able to access your people and your organization when they are in transit. Their connections to you must be streamlined and seamless. They must be supported around the clock and they must be supported worldwide.

When there is friction in your interactions with customers, you lose the chance to deepen relationships with them. Worse, you put those relationships at risk. So it's critical to understand how your mobile infrastructure is supporting customer engagement and how it might be falling short.

OPTIMIZING YOUR ENTERPRISE THROUGH MOBILE WORKFORCE ENABLEMENT

To optimize the spheres of work in your enterprise, it's critical to roll out a mobile workforce enablement solution that addresses the key factors of successful mobile communications. Here are three essential dimensions of a solution:

- **Mobile Access and Connectivity.** You must first ensure your people have access to your communications infrastructure when they are in transit. There are tools that will equip your mobile workforce in this regard. One is *Secure VPN Connectivity*. Virtual Private Networking (VPN) grants secure remote access to corporate data

The essential dimensions of a mobile communications solution include:

- Mobile access and connectivity

- Mobile interaction and collaboration

- Mobility on a global scale

resources, such as email, applications, databases and file stores from remote locations. All you need is broadband Internet access and an enterprise communication system that supports VPN connectivity. Another is *Fixed to Mobile Convergence*. This means that your mobile phone becomes your desktop phone and can access all of the features that your PBX can provide. No matter where they happen to be at the time, remote workers can access and delete voicemail, receive calls as a member of hunt groups or queues and place local, long distance and four-digit extension calls, through their mobile phone.

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- **Mobile Interaction and Collaboration.** Yet another critical factor is the ability to collaborate with colleagues who work in different offices. You need an online meeting application, one that acts like a personal conference room and is available at any time. It should be reliable, secure and simple to use—enabling everything from team meetings to customer presentations to training on-demand. You also want to have a mobile app that makes it easy to schedule, initiate, join and manage meetings. You should be able to rapidly set up a meeting with a few simple steps. The application should simulate a real conference table so you can see who is in the meeting and know who is speaking at any given time. And it should be compatible with the devices that your people value and most often use. Along those lines, it should be easy to control your meetings while making it just as easy for invited participants to join them.

- **Mobility on a Global Scale.** Recognizing that market opportunities are increasingly global in nature, you also want to account for global factors in your mobile solution. It is likely that a growing number of participants in conference calls and virtual meetings will be participating from countries around the world. As the research firm Ovum notes, "Enterprises do not properly recognize the number and severity of the challenges brought on by extending conferencing services to emerging countries." Regulatory differences, infrastructure challenges and potential fraud create barriers to global communication. Given the enormous demands of constructing facilities that support mobile and collaborative efforts on this scale, Ovum recommends using a third party services provider that can support you, particularly as it pertains to conferencing and other collaborative applications.

By rolling out a robust mobile infrastructure and application solution that addresses these key points, you are in a stronger position to enable your mobile workforce. You set the stage to optimize the key spheres of work in terms of mobile readiness. You lay the foundation to become an employer of choice, an agile partner and a valued supplier and solution provider to your customers.

CONCLUSION: ENABLING YOUR GLOBAL MOBILE WORKFORCE

In the coming years, business will increasingly revolve around collaboration and access to information, particularly as the digital generation—the vast bulge of Millennials—enters the workforce. For this generation, mobile technology is a pervasive and powerful force. But it's important to recognize that this phenomenon is global. In fact, the most significant growth opportunities for global enterprises will often be in emerging markets.

Given the rise of the global mobile workforce, you now confront the challenge of engagement and enablement. You'll have to provide the mobile apps, tools and infrastructure to support your people and ensure they can perform their work effectively from anywhere at any time.

Advanced solutions now exist to help you meet this objective. You can enable mobile access and connectivity, mobile interaction and collaboration and mobile support on a global scale. You can mobilize your workforce to open up new markets and drive exceptional growth. Such growth is predicated on the right tools and the right talent to achieve business objectives now—not at some point in the future. It's the difference between organizational longevity and obsolescence.

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