The Growing Impact of Mobile Messaging

An Osterman Research White Paper

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The use of mobile messaging is growing rapidly in organizations of all sizes. Mobile messaging has the opportunity to be a truly disruptive force in organizations of all sizes and can significantly improve workforce productivity.

While mobile messaging can be considered an extension of the corporate worker's desktop environment, mobile's more important impact will likely be on the fundamental *way* that people work by changing the nature of *where and when* they work. By allowing users to be online and accessible much more of the time – for instance when away from their desks or travelling – mobile access changes workplace culture, making it more continuously cooperative and dynamic, shortening decision cycles and improving team working. By liberating users from the need to be at their desks, it enables them to allocate their time more productively, for instance by spending more time with customers or business partners; and it can even reduce the need for physical space at the workplace, reducing real-estate and logistical costs.

Mobile devices tend to be more expensive to deploy and manage and consume a greater proportion of IT resources that desktop messaging systems. Corporate culture issues are also a key issue in the adoption of mobile messaging, requiring decision makers to adapt their organizations to make best use of mobile messaging and the growing variety of applications that will deployed on mobile devices.

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The Importance of Mobile Messaging

As of mid-2007, 15% of the workforce in mid-sized and large organizations in North America has an employer-supplied mobile device based on an Osterman Research survey conducted during summer 2007. Growth of employer-supplier mobile devices is expected to be strong through 2009, growing to 28% of the workforce by that time, almost doubling within two years.

While many often consider mobile messaging to be a tool for traveling or otherwise remote employees, Osterman Research found in the survey mentioned above that 36% of the workforce in mid-sized and large organizations that are equipped with employer-supplied mobile devices use them while they are at work. Simply being away from ones desk, or needing to lookup "quick" information like a contact or

checking for an email without switching away from a desktop application, is enough to encourage users to reach for their handsets. However, this 36% figure is expected to grow to nearly one-half of the workforce with employer-supplied devices by 2009.

This brief is based on an Osterman Research survey of primarily mid-sized and large organizations commissioned by PostPath. In addition, Osterman Research survey data is also included in this brief, as it to supports the growing impact of mobile messaging. This brief highlights key issues that organizations should consider as they evaluate adding mobile users and how this will impact their messging infrastructure.

### Mobile Access to Email is Critical
In the survey of Exchange-enabled organizations conducted for this brief, we found that mobile access to Outlook is important for a variety of groups in the workplace, as shown in the following figures.

Importance of Mobile Access for Various Groups

% Responding Important or Extremely Important
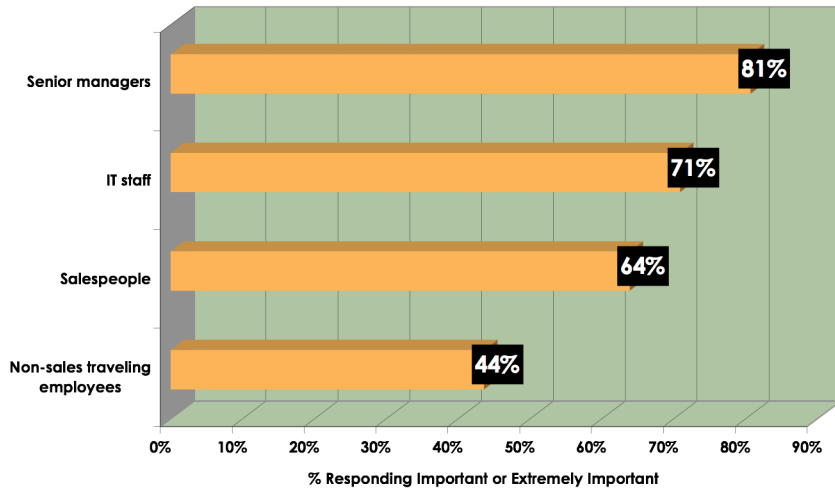
**Importance of On-the-Road Access
to Outlook for Various Groups**
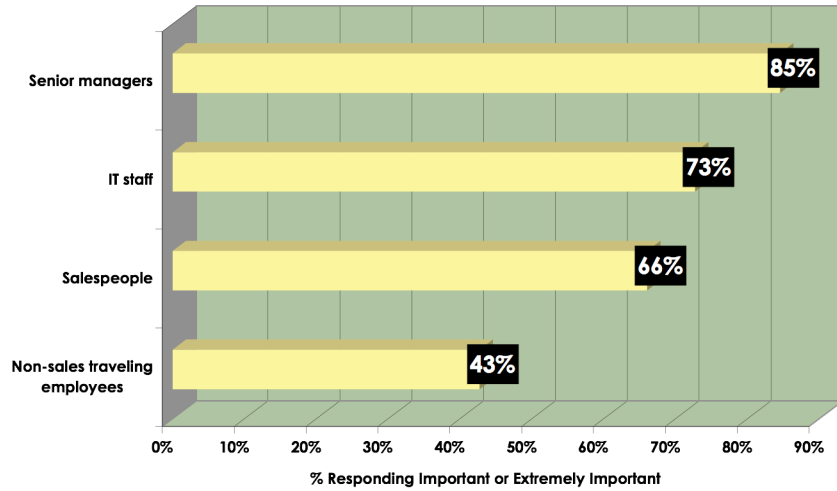
% Responding Important or Extremely Important

Our research shows that the importance of mobile messaging will become greater over time and its use will expand to a growing variety of constituencies in the organization.

**Importance of Webmail Access
for Various Groups**

% Responding Important or Extremely Important
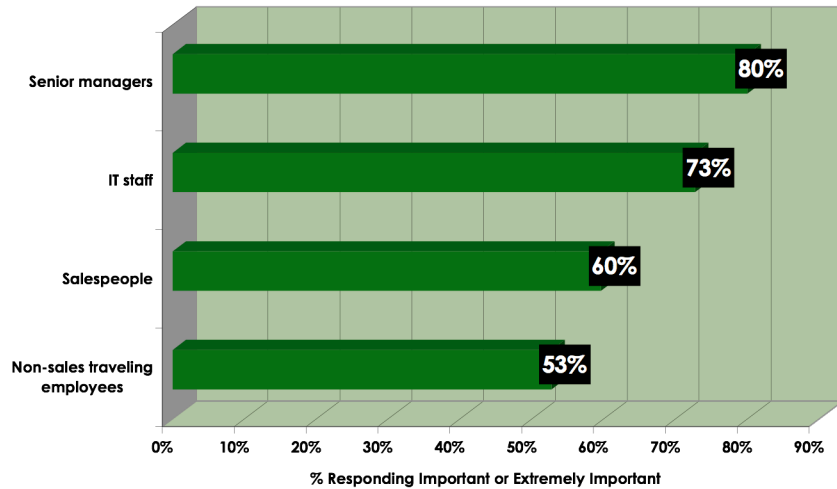
Clearly, then, mobile messaging is important to a variety of groups, from senior executives on down. Our research shows that the importance of mobile messaging will become greater over time and its use will expand to a growing variety of constituencies in the organization.

The Benefits and Burden of Mobile Messaging

The vast majority of organizational decision makers believe that mobile messaging can significantly improve users' productivity. Osterman Research has found that when BlackBerry devices are unavailable due to unplanned downtime, for example, 93% of users are less productive. Further, Osterman Research found that 65% of decision makers agree or strongly agree that mobile messaging can significantly improve users' productivity.

That's the good news.

Now for the Bad News

However, only 38% of messaging decision makers believe that mobile messaging is easy to manage.

- 27% of organizations find that mobile device management increases IT administrative workload.

- 12% of organizations find that mobile device synchronization imposes an additional performance burden on Exchange servers beyond just the burden of Outlook itself.

To address these problems, organizations have undertaken a variety of approaches. For example:

- 34% of organizations have upgraded existing servers to address the additional workload placed on them by mobile device management.

- 31% have limited the number of mobile devices that their IT organization will support.

- 30% of users have distributed users across multiple servers.

- 23% have added additional servers.

What is particularly telling, however, is that mobile devices are used by a relatively small proportion of users today. As the number of mobile users increases, the problems associated with mobile device management will become significantly more pronounced, as will the need for disruptive corrective measures and increased IT management.

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Further Complicating the Problem

Adding a greater burden on the IT organization in most companies is the fact that they are asked to support a growing variety of mobile devices. Many organizations today support BlackBerry, Windows Mobile and Treo devices, meaning that most IT organizations must support three different mobile operating systems, three different vendors, three different upgrade cycles, and so forth. Further, we found that a wide variety of mobile handsets are supported by many organizations.

However, it doesn't end there. Our research found that 62% of organizations are being asked by their users or management to support additional devices. Leading the pack among requested devices is the Apple iPhone, mentioned by 72% of organizations. That means that a fourth major operating system and vendor may well be added to the mobile messaging mix.

Among the factors cited by organizations that limit their willingness to support new devices is the lack of necessary IT system testing, deployment or management time, insufficient numbers of users requesting new devices and the costs of supporting additional devices.

Mobile Devices Requested and Supported in Organizations Today
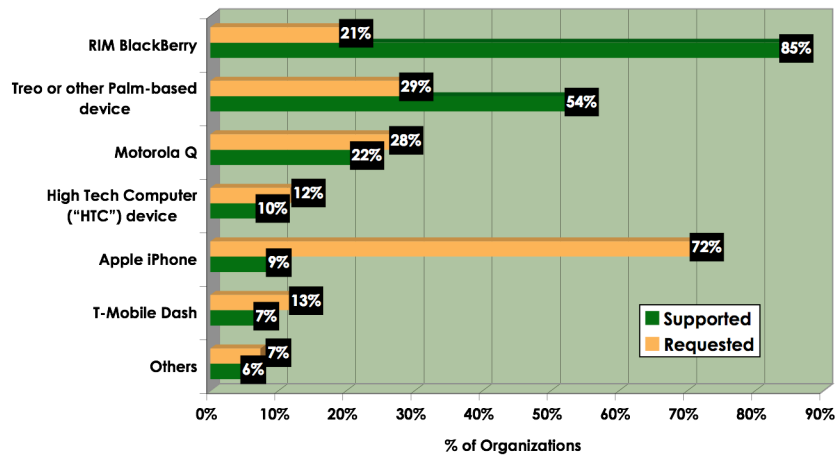
Willingness to Support New Devices is Limited

Among the factors cited by organizations that limit their willingness to support new devices is the lack of necessary IT system testing, deployment or management time (mentioned by 51% of organizations), insufficient numbers of users requesting new devices (44%) and the costs of supporting additional devices (39%).

However, most organizations would prefer to do things differently. For example, our research found that for those employees for whom organizations do not support remote

access via a laptop or PC today, 70% would do so if it were simpler to deploy or manage.

Potential for Data Loss

Despite the potential for improving employee productivity and reducing corporate expenses, mobile messaging carries with it a number of risks and problems. Arguably the most critical issue is the potential for corporate data loss in the event that mobile devices are lost. Mobile handsets, laptops and other mobile devices – which often contain sensitive corporate data – are frequently lost and can expose an organization to enormous liability.

Implement technologies that will help your IT department to manage mobile messaging as effectively as possible with as little investment in labor and other resources. This will allow users to realize the significant benefits that mobility provides while minimizing the impact on the IT department.

What Should You Do Next?

There are three important next steps for organizations that are using and will be expanding their use of mobile messaging:

- Do not underestimate the importance of mobile technologies. Mobile messaging is not a 'nice-to-have' technology for some users, but instead an increasingly critical part of the corporate messaging infrastructure that can significantly boost users' productivity.

- Do not impose artificial limits on the types of devices that will be supported by your organization. A number of competing systems are sought by users and, with the right technology supporting them on the backend, all can be used effectively.

- Related to the point above is to implement technologies that will help your IT department to manage mobile messaging as effectively as possible with as little investment in labor and other resources. This will allow users to realize the significant benefits that mobility provides while minimizing the impact on the IT department.

Summary

Mobile messaging is critical for most organizations and it will become more important over time because of the productivity and other benefits that it offers. However, managing mobile devices is difficult for a number of reasons, including the growing number of mobile devices that are supported, the burden that mobile management and synchronization places on the Exchange server, and other problems that create additional headaches for IT staff. The result is that many organizations do not support mobile messaging as vigorously as they otherwise would.

What organizations need, therefore, is a way to expand the deployment of mobile devices to their user base in order to realize the benefits of mobile messaging, while minimizing the burden of mobile device management on IT. Doing so will allow IT staff to manage mobile devices more efficiently and will permit end users, as well as the organization overall, to realize the significant benefits that mobile messaging offers.

About PostPath

PostPath has developed the industry's first drop-in compatible alternative to Microsoft Exchange. Fully interoperable with the Exchange ecosystem, PostPath's email and collaboration server provides enterprises a lean, high-performance messaging infrastructure, a radically improved cost model, and an innovation-rich upgrade path for traditional and Linux-friendly messaging environments. PostPath was founded in December 2003 and is headquartered in Mountain View, California. For more information, visit www.postpath.com.

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