Dexterra
The Mobile Enterprise

Top Ten Mobility Myths

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Top Ten Mobility Myths

The following pages describe common fears and concerns regarding enterprise mobility development, deployment, and management.

Myth 1. Mobility is not secure

Actually, today mobility is in many cases more secure than an organization's internal systems. It is easier for a would-be hacker to enter the physical premises and plug into an open Ethernet connection to steal data, than it would be for them to try to crack the powerful security around a properly deployed mobility solution.

To put this in perspective, it would take a modern computer more than 2×10^{21} years to crack every possible combination in the standard 128bit SSL encryption used in most mobility platforms.

*Please see the Dexterra Security Taxonomy whitepaper for more information.

Myth 2. Mobility is just an add-on to my existing IT systems

Mobility is its own individual software space with unique application requirements and business processes that do not exist in current IT systems. The processes that mobile workers perform in the field today, such as fixing copiers, inspecting assets, or ordering stock, have never been automated with computers before. The traditional "mobile solution" has been paper, a cell phone, and a fax machine.

Because it is a unique software space, mobility requires integration into backend existing systems, just like CRM should be integrated into ERP to work more efficiently. A successful mobility platform needs to be *more powerful* than the individual systems it integrates to since it needs to perform many of those existing IT capabilities as well as leverage any pertinent data across systems to properly solve the mobility requirements.

Myth 3. I know I need mobility, but I need to get my current IT systems cleaned up first

This is a very common situation. The core of IT is to improve the way an organization functions. The benefits of IT advancement should never be held back unnecessarily. Mobility is one of those

projects. The immediate benefit alone outweighs any discussion on “clean-up”. Cleaning up before deployment usually results in much of the work being done twice.

Back-end systems are rarely ever fully “cleaned up”. It is always an ongoing effort that needs to be managed in parallel with the evolution of the organization’s IT systems. Additionally, the deployment of a mobility system in every case actually results in streamlining the back-end systems. Fields, objects, and – in some cases - entire screens can be eliminated.

Deploying mobility can give a clear view of what components should be streamlined, resulting in less clean-up needing to be performed while still realizing the immediate returns mobility offers.

What is required is a mobility system that can easily integrate to any and all pertinent IT systems. It must also allow for changes in IT systems, such as customizations, upgrades or even complete system migrations. Lastly, it needs to support “read only”, “read/write”, and “read from one system/write to another”, and it must be able to carry forward these system-specific deployments during upgrades.

The truth is the IT laundry list of chores is never complete. Mobility needs to be deployed simultaneously with existing IT projects or it may never happen at all – and mobility deployment can actually assist the clean up process.

Myth 4. Wireless coverage isn’t ubiquitous enough to mobilize yet

Wireless is actually only one component (or subset) of mobility. Mobility must be able to work when there is no wireless.

There will never be complete coverage. Field service workers completing a job in the basement of a brick building, or an elevator shaft or even a parking garage will tell you that. The key is to allow your workers to still gain access to critical data when there is no wireless connection. A rich, robust application and

database (both subsets of mobility) with opportunistic connection capabilities will solve this need.

Properly deployed, a seamless mobile user experience that utilizes an intelligent application to “fill in the gaps” when there is no wireless coverage results in transparent operation by the mobile user. The user does not need to know whether there is a connection or not. The application just simply works. When a connection IS available, the application can opportunistically perform updates over any connection channel, 802.11, wireless, cradle, etc., automatically. At Dexterra we refer to this as “Transparent operation via casual connection”.

Myth 5. Our enterprise is already mobile. We have Blackberries.

While accessing company email outside the firewall is nice, it does not make for a mobile application. Email is a transport mechanism for messaging; it is not a line-of-business application. Enterprise applications are directly responsible for revenue generation.

To properly solve a business’s mobile needs, a mobility platform must be created. This includes the server, tools to build and manage the platform and application, the connectors back into the existing IT infrastructure, and the application itself. The platform needs to do it in a way that is cost effective, change ready, and upgradeable.

When evaluating any mobility system, analyze the costs of the system over its expected life of 3-5 years, and over 4 to 5 phases of deployment as the system is expanded to perform more functions than its original intention. In other words, take a hard look at Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and Cash Flow, rather than just straight Return on Investment (ROI). ROI is just a subset of TCO.

Myth 6. We want to figure out what hardware device to use, then we will find an application for it

Hardware does NOT solve business problems. Surprisingly, up to 30% of those looking at mobility have either already bought the hardware or are about to do so. The usual reason: "…Because we got a good deal on the devices."

To have the most successful mobile platform and lowest TCO, the system needs to be designed and built from the outside in … in other words, with the end-users' requirements and needs in focus.

The only way to solve mobile problems is to find the answer from those that have the issues. The software needs to work the way your mobile workers work. Let the *business process* drive the technology requirements, not the reverse. It is very counter-productive to business to purchase hundreds or thousands of hardware devices only to have them end up on passenger seats or in glove-boxes because the workers didn't adopt them – because the devices didn't fit your workers' needs.

Analyzing the business process requirements, engineering a process to solve problems, then matching those processes with a piece of software technology that best meets those requirements, is the right way to go about it.

Of course, having a complete mobile platform and application suite that makes translating these business processes into actionable User Applications, easily, is the key.

As stated previously, mobility is complex and has subsets. Devices, while usually the bulk of the overall financial expense, is just one component.

Myth 7. Mobility is easy. We'll just have IT build it

A mobile enterprise platform carries with it enormous challenges, including developing effective applications, connectivity, making it secure, deployment, development, integration to existing systems, connection to those systems, governance out to the

field, and changing the application as needs change (continuous process/product improvement). Those are just a few areas that each, by itself, takes months for teams to develop.

Mobile enterprise software, such as that offered by Dexterra, has already overcome these challenges. Dexterra has brought the best-practices of the entire industry to bear on its off-the-shelf offerings in ways that IT simply has not experienced. A packaged software platform and suite solves mobility while allowing the organization to focus on the challenges of running the business in a cost-effective way.

Myth 8. The Pocket PC or similar mobile device is too small. We have a 50,000 SKU parts catalog so we need a REAL computer.

Don't be fooled by the smaller screen, there is a REAL computer in that Pocket Personal Computer! Many Pocket PCs today come with 128MB RAM and a 400MHz CPU, standard. There are memory options for Pocket PCs such as Secure Digital (SD) and Compact Flash (CF) cards that are readily available in the 512MB, 1GB, and even 2GB sizes. There is even an option for the Pocket PC that provides *60GB* of storage.

Having a smart application that guides the user through their process, and only displays exactly what they need to see when they need to see it even compensates for the small screen. For instance, even maps can be displayed efficiently given the right process. The application must be intelligent and process-driven, taking the difficulty of learning and using an enterprise application away from the mobile user and essentially navigating for them. In this way the mobile device becomes an *indispensable tool* that even the most skeptical users refuse to work without.

This enables the mobile user to focus on their job – delivering packages, servicing a printer, or selling – rather than struggling to operate a complex computer program. Previous PDAs lack the horsepower to accommodate this type of application, but the Pocket PC with its Microsoft foundation and Dexterra applications overcome any previous obstacles regarding a small form factor.

Myth 9. We are planning to use the "free" mobility add-on that comes with our enterprise product.

There are several red flags to consider with this myth:

1. Mobility is NOT easy to solve – otherwise it would have been solved by enterprise vendors long ago

2. An enterprise vendor is not 100% focused on the issues surrounding mobility for an individual vertical or customer

3. Mobilizing a database table doesn't make a user's life easier. In fact, mobile deployments that mimic desktop functionality or simply present data objects (screens that show customer or product information) make the mobile experience cumbersome and difficult. This typically lowers the rate of user adoption and increases the project's risk

4. Enterprise mobility add-ons are not going to make it simple to connect to other enterprise systems. Most enterprises have at least 3-5 systems that need to be mobilized into a single application to truly solve the needs of the users in the field

5. If it is free, the vendor must not think very highly of their own product. With enterprise applications, you DO get what you pay for.

Myth 10. Mobility isn't mature yet – we're just looking around to see what's out there.

The waiting is over:
"Eliminating the inefficient paper method of supply chain management and automating the process of data gathering and automatically synchronizing with backend systems and databases, SDI (Strategic Distribution, Inc.) expects to realize a 40% increase in productivity as a result of deploying the Dexterra solution." - SDI case study

"Using Dexterra and PEAK Technologies, NFS (National Filter Service) realized its investment in just five months. Efficiency has increased 27 percent, allowing NFS to expand its customer base

without increasing costs. Additionally, billing is reduced from a typical 21-day cycle to a 2-day cycle." – NFS case study

"Today IKON's 600+ technicians can obtain customer information without ever setting foot inside corporate headquarters. They can solve problems on-site, order parts electronically, and add account specific notes as needed. Billing questions have dropped dramatically; customer service approval ratings have risen 11%.

"The average parts order now takes only 20 seconds instead of five minutes. Each day, IKON field technicians save over 15,700 minutes in wasted time checking and ordering parts the traditional way, which translates into savings of more than $70,000 per year in mobile voice /data carrier costs alone. Field processing time has now decreased by 51%." – IKON case study

Mobility is mature. It is real and tangible. It is saving organizations hundreds of thousands and even *millions* of dollars per year. It can even be used to *fund its own deployment and provide budget for other projects* in most cases. Chances are your competition is creating a competitive advantage by using a mobile platform or rolling one out right now.

Dexterra can show you how to get started and go mobile today!

For more information, please contact Jim Knoblich, Account Development Manager, at 425-939-3154 or your Dexterra Mobile Solutions Architect.