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The 5 Essential Benefits of Mobile Technology

For Organizations, Mobile Workers, and Customers

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In today's market, companies that have not fully embraced mobile technology are operating at a serious disadvantage. Not only are these organizations sacrificing efficiency—and profitability—by relying on paper-based workflows, they are also missing out on the many ways that mobile technology can transform the way their employees can work as a team and interact with customers.

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Many best-in-class organizations that rely on mobile employees have already learned how mobile apps and integrated back-end platforms can replace inefficient paper-based workflows and open up a new world of effectiveness and productivity. As

more companies have deployed smart workforce management capabilities, mobility has rapidly become a critical tool for winning and retaining new business.

This white paper explains the 5 essential benefits that mobile technology brings to an organization, their mobile workers, and their customers.

1. Businesses Can Better Meet Expectations in a Mobile-First World

Mobile devices—and the mobile apps that make those devices so useful—have become ubiquitous. This is a mobile-first world. Data from a wide variety of sources reveal just how much our society depends on our smartphones.

- The number of smartphone users around the world will exceed 2 billion in 2016.¹
- There are 178 million smartphone users in the U.S.—73.6% market penetration.²
- Of those smartphone owners, 96% use mobile apps.³
- More than 200 million mobile workers use mobile business apps.⁴

The importance of mobility isn't lost on forward-thinking organizations. In fact, a recent survey found that 84% of mobile decision makers plan to increase spending on mobile applications that drive effectiveness, reduce costs, improve employee productivity, and enhance customer satisfaction.⁵ Additionally, 82% of surveyed service organizations indicated that mobility will be strategic initiative for their operation in the coming years.⁶

Of course, realizing the benefits of mobility requires far more than merely getting smart devices in the hands of mobile workers. The ultimate goal is to empower mobile workers with real-time intelligence that turns them into better decision makers and enables them to resolve customer issues with greater efficiency. This requires apps tailored to the unique needs of the workforce.

2. Mobility Empowers the Mobile Worker

Mobile technology connects people with real-time information about assets, inventory, and jobs. Using their mobile devices, workers in the field can retrieve helpful information and update documents as well as customer or supplier records from

wherever they are. By creating a two-way link between the field and the back office, organizations give their mobile workers the ability to complete workplace tasks without ever stepping inside an office or making a phone call.

Pickups and Deliveries Are Handled More Efficiently

Organizations that rely on a mobile workforce to transport goods or cargo greatly benefit from mobile technology. For years, smaller organizations were forced to watch from the sidelines as major companies enjoyed the benefits of mobility. Today, the dramatic growth of mobile device ownership and functionality has effectively leveled the playing field, making this technology available to businesses of all sizes.

Every driver can be equipped with a mobile device loaded with apps that are fully integrated with software commonly used in the office, such as dispatching, inventory management, and billing systems. This allows them to access and share critical information in real-time with improved accuracy and consistency.

Without having to call or return to the office, drivers can receive new assignments directly from a dispatcher, find the best route to their destination, receive critical job updates on the go, and effortlessly keep managers in the loop with status updates throughout the day. Drivers can also use their mobile device to capture signatures as well as complete and electronically submit custom forms, helping the organization transition to a more efficient paperless workflow.

Higher First-Time Fix Rates Lead to Satisfied Customers

An important metric for service organizations is the first-time fix rate—the frequency with which workers resolve service calls in one visit. Getting the job done right the first time results in happy customers and more productive employees. Delays and return visits lead to higher costs and frustration for both customers and the organization itself.

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In the field, a mobile device empowers service technicians to communicate, collaborate, navigate, share data, and provide proof of service, all using a single mobile app. These capabilities significantly improve workers' ability to resolve

issues on the first visit. For instance, armed with access to back-office information, technicians can review service records, identify required parts or tools prior to arrival at the site, and ensure they have everything they need to complete the job.

3. Mobility Enables Companies to Streamline Daily

Operations

Innovative organizations that invest in mobility gain a competitive edge over peers who have failed to embrace this technology. Mobility leaders are simply able to offer a higher level of customer service—driving customer acquisition and retention while also increasing efficiency and profitability. At a glance, dispatchers can see the location and status of every mobile asset. They can also rapidly dispatch workers to new locations and track their progress in real-time.

Organizations also benefit from the data collection and reporting functions offered by mobile apps. These critical capabilities empower businesses to meet regulatory requirements and identify opportunities to improve their standard operating procedures. Companies can easily track, report, and analyze employee behavior and vehicle activity, from the most granular details to the big-picture trends.

Cost has long been the major obstacle preventing small to midsize organizations from taking advantage of the benefits of mobility—but that barrier is rapidly crumbling. That's because the required investment in mobility continues to decrease as smartphones become less expensive, the cost of data plans trends downward, software becomes less expensive and easier to implement, and employees utilize devices they already own.

4. Going Paperless Mitigates Costs and Risks

Unbelievably, as recently as 2013 over half of companies (57%) with inspection and field service functions reported that they were still using paper forms, even though the cost associated with the time spent searching, recreating, and redistributing misplaced forms costs businesses an average of \$125 per form. This cost skyrockets to \$300-\$700 if the form is completely lost.⁷

Going paperless isn't just a matter of driving down costs. Problems with paper files and broken document processes create serious business risks and compliance issues:⁸

- 75.9% of surveyed companies experienced significant business risks and/or compliance issues and suffered severe consequences
- 36.2% failed to meet compliance requirements
- 24.9% said they lost major customers
- 20.4% were pulled into a major audit

Both in the office and in the field, using paper forms is an outdated, inefficient, and costly way to run a business. Mobility empowers organizations to cut costs and reduce risk, while boosting productivity by giving mobile workers real-time access to important documents and information. As we move further into the 21st century, it's time to ask the question: can organizations that fail to deploy mobility still compete?

5. Versatile Mobile Capabilities Enhance Customer Service

Sadly for customers, many organizations struggle with achieving a first-time fix rate that sets them apart from their competition.

The following scenario is far too common:

A piece of equipment breaks down. The customer requests service. Dispatch schedules a field technician. The technician arrives but spends time searching the truck for the part they need to complete the repair, only to discover that they don't have it. They call into the office for assistance. Not only must that technician retrieve the part and return later to complete the repair, they were unable to complete their other scheduled repairs for that day.

Mobile technology enables companies avoid this type of situation with smarter management of inventory, work orders, and

dispatching.

Studies have highlighted the many benefits organizations experience after successfully implementing mobile technology for their field workforces, including:

- 66% first-time fix rate
- 15% increase in worker productivity measured by average calls completed daily
- 86% customer retention rate
- 77% service level agreement compliance
- 50% decrease in mean time per repair, from job ticket creation to issue resolution

When service technicians are equipped with mobile apps that provide access to the same information available back at the office, they can map out efficient routes to job sites, check ahead of time that they have the parts they need, and make better, faster decisions once they arrive on site. The result is increased productivity, better customer service, and a stronger bottom line.

Unlock the Benefits of Mobility With the Right Solutions Provider

In the early days of mobile technology, only large organizations could afford to take advantage of the power and efficiency that mobility offers. Those days are gone. Today, mobile solutions are affordable, easy to deploy, and offer a wider range of functionality than ever before. As the cost of mobility falls and its benefits rise, any organization whose mobile workers continue to rely on paper-based processes will struggle to stay competitive.

With the help of a provider that offers a comprehensive suite of mobility solutions, organizations of all sizes can gain an advantage by eliminating operational inefficiencies, empowering their mobile workforce, and providing superior customer service—all of which translates into a positive impact on the bottom line.

Citations

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