The path to true mobility

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15 Dec 2014

As mobile data costs continue to decline, the much-vaunted concepts of enterprise mobility and the remote workforce are now very much top of mind for most organisations. Technological advances in mobile services and products have changed the way that customers and the workforce consume various business services.

CIOs are identifying key mobility use cases with tangible business benefits. Enterprise service availability to mobile workforce increases staff efficiency, productivity and significantly reduces idle time in executing workflow processes.

At T-Systems we place a concerted focus on empowering clients and their staff to work from wherever, whenever. We firmly believe this breeds increased productivity and leads to new connections, new innovations and, ultimately, greater business success.

However, the landscape is clouded by vendors, White Papers and industry consultants who over-complicate the process of 'mobilising the enterprise'. The good news is that path to true mobility doesn't necessarily have to be massively complex, costly, lengthy, and development intensive.

Firstly, let's define the term. True mobility means providing employees and business partners with always-on access to enterprise services, irrespective of the type of device they are using. In order to bring to life the promise of 'bring your own device', a fully hosted, device-agnostic set-up is vital.

This way, organisations can avoid broad application redevelopment and maintenance - such as developing services for Android, Windows, Linux and Macintosh operating systems.

Four key considerations

Achieving true enterprise mobility requires that organisations approach the issue from the following four angles:

- Architecture: Enterprise services are hosted in appropriate cloud-based architecture and can be accessed by any and all mobile devices - irrespective of operating system, screen size, or how new they are. These devices are managed by simple and secure authentication policies;
- Device management: Shift device ownership to the employees by subsidising part of the costs and encouraging them to invest in a powerful, flexible smartphone, tablet or laptop that they can use for personal and professional requirements. This relieves the company of end-point device management, removes weighty depreciating assets from the balance sheet, and allows it to focus more on the strategic delivery of enterprise services to the users;
- Applications: The organisation will select the most appropriate core enterprise services - such as ERP and CRM tools - that need to be extended to remote workers. These core features are then augmented by provisioning the productivity tools that go hand in hand - such as instant messaging, email, Presence, file share, intranets and VOIP; and
- Offline capabilities: Offline working allows certain predetermined users to store data on their devices, which are then managed under an enterprise mobility management suite to mitigate security risks. This, essentially, creates a separate compartment where all corporate data is stored, allowing for the selective wipe of corporate data in the case of theft/loss, or when the employee is leaving the organisation.

Achieving zero distance

True mobility compresses the distance between colleagues, and between individuals and the organisation.

Now, wherever they may be, they can approve purchase orders, edit presentations, connect to meetings and access customer profiles. In fact, the list goes on, as far as the organisation wants it to. Companies can choose to extend just a few services to mobile users, or enable hundreds of different applications. It depends on the organisation's mobility strategy, its size, and the nature of its business.

With true mobility, new users can be added as needed, and certain permissions and licences more easily administered. For instance, freelancers and consultants can be on-boarded with expiry policies relating to data and software licences. This helps the organisation to keep control over one of its most valued assets - its data.

But the biggest advantage of true mobility is that the organisation can react to customers with greater agility and innovation, to bring new services to market, and to maintain closer relationships in real time. This is gives rise to the concept of 'zero distance' between the organisation and its customers.

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