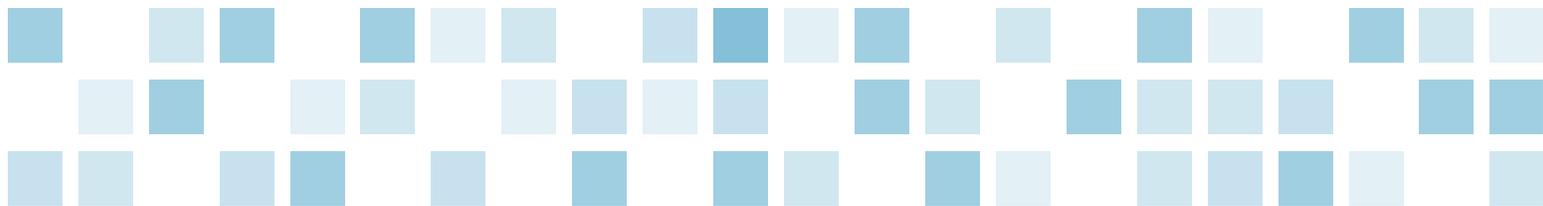


Enabling mobility within your organization: Integrating mobile apps to enhance business operations



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The capabilities available with advances in mobility are seemingly limitless, although many fail to realize the potential business benefits of today's apps. Devices are frequently utilized to update social networking platforms, perform personal banking and reserve travel, but the ability also exists to sell more products and increase the performance of your business. Organizations are increasingly adopting mobility into their technology platform, and now is the time to start using applications more effectively.

Mobile apps have not been adopted to their full potential from a business perspective for several reasons. In the past, applications have been more difficult to use than a PC or laptop, but with recent advances, that is changing. In addition, apps were not business-specific, while today's general apps are more adaptable toward any business, and as mobile device usage and demand increases, more apps are being devoted to individual industries.

Properly integrating apps into your organization can have a positive impact on every level of the business. Apps currently exist, or can be developed to bridge gaps in your processes and dramatically improve operations.

Executive level

Several apps currently exist that provide greater insight into your operations and can help increase productivity. For example, Microstrategy has multiple apps that increase business intelligence capabilities. One, in particular, Microstrategy mobile for iPad, allows you to create different views of your operations and set custom parameters to evaluate your company data.

NetSuite also has a comprehensive mobile app, providing more clarity into your operations and customized dashboards that deliver a greater depth of company information. Data and dashboards can be established from an executive leadership perspective and shared with employees for benchmarking throughout the entire organization.

Sales organization

A wide variety of apps are available that enable your sales organization to access customer information and act upon leads on the go. Salesforce.com has developed multiple apps which work in concert with its desktop platform. Chatter, a social networking application, allows for increased collaboration and instant sharing

of important data and information. The traditional Salesforce interface, along with Chatter and targeted dashboard applications create an environment that enables effective, direct communication with customers and prospects.

Order processing

After an order is placed, apps can be implemented within your organization to increase efficiency throughout the fulfillment process. When working with paper-based operations, it can take days or even weeks to produce documents and collect signatures necessary to complete orders.

However, with applications such as DocuSign, custom templates are created and signatures collected electronically, increasing customer satisfaction with expedited orders and reducing lost sales through possible delays. DocuSign and similar apps provide many practical usages throughout any organization, instantly collecting signatures and processing documents across multiple locations.

Enabling your customers

In addition to integrating apps to improve processes for employees, appropriate attention should also be focused on making it easier for customers to do business with you. Progressive companies have turned to developing custom applications to accomplish everything from delivering basic information about the business or directions to a location to enabling purchases from a smartphone or mobile device.

Large companies such as hotel chains and airlines have utilized apps for years, allowing consumers to make room reservations or check into a flight at any time. However, developing a robust, customer-facing app is no longer just the domain of large multinational companies. Implementing an app that streamlines processes, while encouraging more customer interaction and ultimately sales, is possible and affordable for businesses of all sizes.

Simplifying common processes

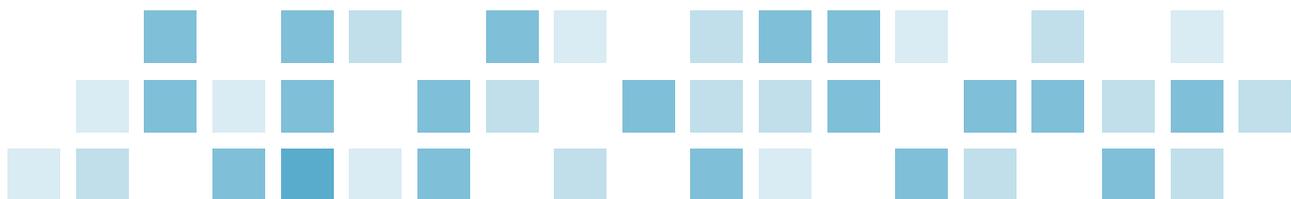
The most value in mobile apps comes from automating the pain points within your business and increasing efficiency. Whether your employees struggle with file storage, document distribution or simple note taking, apps exist that can alleviate those issues. For example:

Keynote is an application that helps to create, review and present presentations from your mobile device or tablet. The program helps input text, organize slides and integrate a wide variety of graphic elements, as well as offering multiple options when you are ready to deliver a presentation.

Numbers is a spreadsheet application, providing the ability to create new documents, or access and input data on the go. The program provides an impressive assortment of charts, tables and graphs that were previously only available from a desktop computer.

Pages is a program that brings robust word processing capabilities to your mobile device. The program creates dynamic letters, forms and other documents, with an intuitive framework to input text or graphics.

Evernote is a note taking application for use across many platforms, from laptops to smartphones and tablets. Instead of bringing a notepad into a meeting, a laptop or mobile device can be utilized to record notes. As notes accumulate, Evernote categorizes them and provides continuity, rather than endless paper notes that others may not be able to read.



Box is another application that is available across multiple platforms, providing file storage and sharing from laptops, PCs and mobile devices. The platform enables users to move files of almost any size between devices, as well as transferring files to others. Box also allows for effective collaboration, as users can add comments and suggestions on shared files.

TurboScan is a scanning application that scans single or multipage documents into high-quality PDFs. Users simply utilize a smartphone camera to take a picture of a document, such as an expense report or receipt, and the app instantly creates a PDF. These documents can be stored in the app, or emailed directly to others.

The app market is flooded with options; some are useful, while others do not come from reputable sources and are potentially damaging. Pay attention to ratings and reviews to gain information on the viability and security of any app you consider implementing. If you find that general apps do not fit your specific needs, a consultant or internal IT staff can develop a custom application geared to your requirements and the information you want to disseminate.

In addition to security concerns, there are other important considerations when choosing apps to integrate into your business processes. Some apps are only available on certain platforms; for example, some are exclusive to Apple while others are can only be found for Android devices. In addition, be sure that any app you choose will successfully integrate with your existing platforms and processes.

With the depth of applications available, the potential for improving your business processes is significant. If you have a need, there is likely an existing app to help you increase mobility and conduct business more efficiently. If an app is not currently available, a developer can build a custom platform to refine your processes. It may take some time and effort to find the right applications, but the benefits that result from implementing the right apps within your business can result in valuable time and cost savings.

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