When it Comes to Enterprise Mobility, Can ‘Slow and Steady’ Win the Race?

Deloitte Debates

Some enterprises are taking a slow, steady approach by adopting mobile technology to do what they’ve always done more effectively. Others are using mobile to jumpstart transformative changes in their business or operating models, doing fundamentally different things. Which is more effective?

In many organizations, mobile initiatives are popping up in almost every business unit, department and region. Some are pushing existing solutions and processes from the web and desktop to mobile devices. Others are reimagining their business without location constraints. Both have the potential to improve efficiencies and effectiveness, but which is likely to have the more significant payback?

Here’s the debate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point</th>
<th>Counter-Point</th>
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<tr>
<td>Take it slow.</td>
<td>Don’t hold back.</td>
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<td>Mobile is exploding in the consumer world,</td>
<td>What might be accomplished by an untethered workforce? The potential leaps</td>
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<td>but business is different. Companies with</td>
<td>in enterprise productivity could touch virtually every functional area.</td>
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<td>remote sales forces and field services</td>
<td>Those who drag their feet will likely be left in the dust by those who use</td>
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<td>might have a lot to gain, but others should</td>
<td>mobile technology to fundamentally change how business works.</td>
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<td>avoid significant investments until they’re</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>confident this trend is here to stay.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The security risk is just too great.</td>
<td>Possible risk doesn’t equal acceptable risk.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too often you hear about a smartphone being</td>
<td>Is the risk associated with a lost smartphone or tablet any greater than a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stolen. What do we do when our company’s</td>
<td>laptop? Many find that increased productivity and connectivity can create</td>
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<td>confidential data gets into the wrong hands?</td>
<td>value that offsets their reasonable risks.</td>
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Smartphones aren’t for everyone.

Mobile devices designed for consumers aren’t built for many working conditions. You can’t swipe a touchscreen wearing leather gloves or risk dropping a mobile device in water.

It’s better to wait until things settle down.

Mobility players are constantly churning. How can you know which platform—or vendors—will have staying power?

It’s more than phones and tablets.

Mobile technology allows organizations to communicate with many types of assets – people and things. Embedded sensors can track parts across a supply chain, locate employees during an emergency and monitor fuel performance in a nationwide fleet.

You may be waiting forever.

While consolidation in the app world continues, the major platforms are relatively stable. It’s smart to find a solution that works today and build from that.

My take

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Wireless connectivity and mobile devices have already transformed the way many of us work. I anticipate that within five years we won’t be talking about enterprise mobility as a stand-alone topic—by then it’s likely to be an integral part of day-to-day business.

The business case for mobile solutions varies based on the business and industry. Some will choose to apply enterprise mobility to tweak existing processes, while others could use it to disrupt their industry. Many forward-thinking CIOs representing both groups are building a foundation of mobile capabilities, from developing talent with intuitive design abilities to addressing complex issues around integration, security and maintenance.

Delivering effective mobile solutions typically requires new skills, new mindsets, new application architectures, new methodologies and new approaches to problem solving. Change this massive won’t happen overnight. If you’re not already on the mobile track, you can learn a lot just from getting started. Consider developing your roadmap with a six-month horizon to account for rapid technology changes. Over time, you’ll become prepared to make bolder bets and move toward a mobile-first mentality with capabilities in place to help meet the demands of business in an untethered world.
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