

5 Trends That Will Impact Your IT Planning in 2012

Mobility



Small Business
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Executive Brief

Mobility

Many of the IT trends that your organization will tackle in 2012 aren't new, but that doesn't mean your IT staff can sit still while technology continues to evolve. This Executive Brief is one of five installments in this series that will examine trends you need to include in your IT planning in 2012.

Everyone is familiar with the small business archetype of the last century: a new business starts in a garage, a spare bedroom or a corner of the living room; it then outgrows that space, adds employees and finds commercial office space where everyone can work together. Then, if all goes well, the business continues to grow and add employees until it occupies an entire building and takes off from there.

It's a path followed by more than one Fortune 500 firm, but thanks to a number of factors —technological, demographic and economic — many businesses are bypassing that second step and de-emphasizing the office or skipping it entirely. There's a global pool of talent to choose from, and getting the right person for a position is increasingly taking precedence over the location of the person.

Even small and medium businesses (SMBs) that are following the traditional model will be more dispersed in 2012 than they were in years past. Technology changes the



way employees handle their work-life balance: parents can check email from Little League games; visiting family out of town doesn't mean being out of contact; and the smartphone is a more practical way to stay in touch than a laptop when traveling for business or pleasure.

The result is an increasingly mobile way of working — one that employees don't only enjoy, but are demanding as the calendar turns to 2012.

Consider these numbers:

- A 2011 Sybase survey found that 75 percent of workers would give up free coffee, food and office supplies if they could use their own device; 20 percent would give up a vacation day.

- IDC predicts that the number of employee-owned smartphones in the workplace will double by 2014
- IDC found that 35 percent of workers in U.S. buy their own smartphone for work use — 40 percent of them say they use it at home and want it at work too.

This poses a dilemma for SMBs and their IT administrators: they can offer employees a variety of devices, including laptop PCs and smartphones to keep them connected; or they can ignore what's become known as "the consumerization of IT" and suffer the consequences when employees circumvent the rules in place and turn to their own devices. An ISACA survey found that more than half of the IT leaders in the U.S. believe employee-

owned devices are bigger threats than mobile devices supplied by the company, but 27 percent think benefits outweigh the risks.

IT administrators are challenged with keeping employees productive wherever they are while they are using devices that may or may not be issued by the company. The specific challenges include:

- Keeping business data secure without limiting mobility
- Managing multiple devices with different form factors and operating systems
- Developing a mobile infrastructure that can manage these devices, often with products from different vendors
- Finding help with setting up and integrating the products that make up a mobile infrastructure

Building a Mobility Platform for 2012 and Beyond

A mobility platform that works for both employees and businesses consists of a number of parts, from the devices themselves to management consoles and security. At the very least, SMBs building a mobility platform in 2012 will want to explore the following:

- **Laptops**, including all of the software possibilities for security and management
- **Tablets**, which come in various shapes and sizes, and are playing

a big part of the consumerization of IT

- **Smartphones**, which are an indispensable part of any mobility strategy because of their ability to handle both voice and data
- A **mobile device management (MDM)** platform, which allows administrators fine-grain control over access and permissions and helps deploy, update and patch devices and software
- A **mobile data protection** solution, which can include advanced authentication for devices, software to remotely wipe the drives of lost devices and backup and restore services
- **Professional services** from a vendor that has mobility specialists with resources unavailable to many SMBs
- **Professional support** to help with emergencies and troubleshooting

Mobility platforms are the ultimate in heterogeneous environments. With all of the different devices, operating

systems, management platforms and security solutions, SMBs will likely deal with products from a number of different vendors. There are three words SMBs should keep in mind when building a mobility platform or looking for someone to handle the task for them: open, integrated and secure.

An open mobility infrastructure is device and platform agnostic and uses industry standards to avoid vendor lock-in. An integrated mobility infrastructure uses components that are designed to work together, providing a seamless experience for employees using the devices and administrators that manage them. A secure infrastructure also delivers benefits to both users and administrator; users get the freedom and convenience of a mobile connection co-workers and data, while administrators get the confidence that business data and devices are protected in the case of theft, data breach or malware attack.

Different SMBs will look for different features in a mobility platform

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depending on their needs and future plans. Medium-sized businesses will want to ensure their mobility platform has the flexibility to accommodate a growing workforce, while at the same time choosing a partner that can provide advice and support as their needs change over time.

Smaller businesses need reliable, durable mobile devices because they often lack the IT resources for quick fixes and repairs. A dependable backup and recovery solution is a good idea for the same reason. Smaller businesses also need to find a partner who can give advice and support as they grow and upgrade devices.

How Dell Can Help

Dell and its partners can deliver an end-to-end mobility solution that starts with laptops, tablets

and mobile workstations and helps customers manage devices and data so employees can collaborate with co-workers, customers and partners without limitations.

Powered by Microsoft Windows 7, Dell Vostro laptops are built with small business users in mind and feature outstanding performance, security and support at a great value. Dell's Latitude line of laptops also features the Windows 7 operating system, and is designed for small and medium business users. The Latitude line now includes Latitude ST tablets powered by Windows 7, as well as laptops. For users that need more power Windows 7-powered Dell Precision workstations are available in the laptop form factor as well.

Available in-house or via the cloud, Dell's mobile device management

(MDM) service can be used to automate the management of thousands of mobile devices. It helps control the costs of managing a mobile infrastructure by offering end-user self-service and managing the roaming features of smartphones. It also enhances data security by deleting data from lost or stolen devices and separating personal and work data on devices.

The Dell Mobility Application Platform (DMAP) provides the end-to-end data security that allows users to securely deliver applications and data to both corporate and individual mobile users. Customers can use DMAP to write an application once and deploy it across multiple smartphone platforms.

Dell also works with Good for Enterprise to deliver a simple, cost-effective platform to secure, deploy



and manage a broad range of mobile phones and tablets. Using a Web-based device management console, administrators can get complete visibility into their entire mobile device deployment from virtually anywhere at anytime.

Conclusion

Small business employees returned to the office in 2012 with new mobile devices, including smartphones and tablets, they received over the holidays. Those devices are finding their way into the business IT infrastructure whether administrators like it nor not. This is all part of a growing trend that some call “the consumerization of IT,” where employees increasingly look to use websites and devices they use at

home to deliver convenience and flexibility at work.

Business data is findings its way to these various mobile devices, in addition to the laptops and phones issued by SMBs. In order to manage the data and devices in a way that keeps both secure, businesses need to develop a mobility platform. This platform needs to be built on an open, flexible infrastructure that allows products from various vendors to work together to manage devices with different manufacturers and operating systems. It also needs to be able to scale with small businesses as they grow.

Small and medium businesses can turn to Dell for the hardware, software and services to help them create a reliable, secure mobile platform to use with business and personal devices. ■