Mobilizing the Enterprise

By N. Mordelet

An April 2007 study by the Economist Intelligence Unit reported that while mobile technology has rapidly penetrated the workplace (48% of the workforce is now mobile\(^1\)), the proliferation of mobile technologies has more to do with the ubiquity of mobile devices than with any clear strategic thinking from senior management. Enterprise use of mobile devices is widespread, yet only a minority of companies (36% in the survey) has developed a clear strategy to guide it, with plans for implementation, monitoring and trouble-shooting. Hence the need for enterprises to transform their networks.

The study sponsored by Alcatel-Lucent, provides solid confirmation that “mobilizing” the enterprise is a global trend impacting companies of all sizes. Mobile usage will continue to grow, and enterprises will try to use it to increase productivity while still controlling costs. However, further productivity gains are likely to be limited until companies manage the deployment and use of mobile technology in a more systematic way.

**Mobility Driving Productivity**

A full 68% of the executives surveyed say their personal productivity has improved by at least 20% thanks to the use of mobile technology (phones, Blackberrys, WiFi-enabled laptops, other mobile devices and applications); while 91% say it has boosted the productivity of their employees substantially or somewhat. These benefits have manifested themselves most clearly in easier, faster access to people and reduced “dead time” while traveling, and overall in an improved level of responsiveness within the organization (Figure 1).

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1 © 2007, Business in motion: Managing the mobile workforce, Economist Intelligence Unit
Embracing the Challenges of Mobilization

The biggest challenge to maximizing the potential of mobility is the increasingly blurred distinction between employees’ personal and work time, according to 68% of the survey’s respondents.

Employees’ inability to deal with the pressures of constant availability and (for some) working remotely in isolation could ultimately affect their motivation and reduce potential productivity gains. There is a clear demand to support employees across the value chain as they develop new ways of working with customers and business partners.

On the other hand, while most enterprises have addressed the data security aspects of increased mobile access, two thirds of the companies surveyed have not provided employees with training on mobile technology. Still fewer are training managers in how to manage mobile employees.

Most enterprises are struggling to implement mobile technologies, and lack the strategic direction to harness the true potential of anytime, anywhere communications. As a result, enterprises are not taking full advantage of the range of the productivity sensitive mobility features available (Figure 2).

To read the full Economist Intelligence Unit’s whitepaper titled, “Business in motion: Managing the mobile workforce”, go to http://www.alcatel-lucent.com in the whitepaper resource center.

Patterns of Use

Email and messaging to remain favored applications, but executives also expect to use VoIP, videoconferencing more frequently.

Which of the following mobile applications do you/will you personally use most frequently? (Top responses)

- Email: 77%
- Web Browsing: 33%
- Calendar/Task Manager: 31%
- Instant Messaging: 28%
- Voice over IP with Laptop: 18%
- Mobile CRM: 15%
- Videoconferencing: 11%
- VoIP: 4%

> A similar pattern across all regions, industries, company sizes

Source: Yankee Group, IDC, Deutsche Bank 10/06
A New Opportunity for Service Providers

This lack of direction presents a real opportunity for service providers to step in and leverage their knowledge of converged networks and managed/unified communications to add value to their enterprise customer relationships.

Enterprise Interactions used to be telephony based and data networks specialized. Today, enterprises try to manage voice, Internet and mobile technologies convergence in the pursuit of competitive advantage and business growth. Their challenge is to deliver connectivity and secure access to information and applications on the move, in real time, on any device, while controlling costs. This drives demand for more coverage, more bandwidth and advanced applications.

The solutions to these challenges already exist, in terms of Managed Communications (MCS) that combine on-premises equipment (CPE) and network-based solutions to maximize employee efficiency and customer satisfaction (contact center).

Enterprise customers can use MCS to offload all or part of the management of their mobile and other communications systems to their service provider while retaining control of costs and network development.

The move to an all-IP network can offer even more benefits. Services such as IP-PBX, Virtual PBX, voice VPN, One-phone, collaboration and conferencing can be deployed separately, or bundled together depending on the enterprise's strategic needs. The adoption of an all-IP network allows enterprises to converge services and offer a seamless customer contact experience, regardless of location, access network or terminal.

By 2010, it is estimated that the Internet will carry about 30% of corporate voice traffic and 25% of carrier voice minutes. Mobile users, and enterprise users in general, will benefit from real-time and optimized communications (such as unified communications) enabled by IMS and advanced applications (presence and directory information, converged user identity) through the broadband network.

More and more enterprises are moving toward the Managed Communications model to manage their business critical communications: who can afford to be left behind? (Figure 3). The time for enterprises to plan their long-term communications strategy is now.

Figure 3: Enterprise outsourcing strategies

Strategy

> Most firms will outsource mobile services delivery to some extent

Which of the following will be the most effective model at your company for the delivery of enterprise mobile services over the next five years?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>APAC</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Firms</td>
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<td>Financial Services</td>
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<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>35%</td>
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The Need to Transform

True enterprise mobilization goes beyond carrying a mobile phone everywhere. It also means being able to read emails, access network applications or view and share documents. Mobile technology will play a key role in increasing collaboration between different areas of the enterprise and maximizing the value of customer relationships.

Executives in the survey see the integration of mobile applications with core enterprise systems as essential to ensuring further productivity gains. This requires network transformation and, for many enterprises, a long-term partnership with a trusted service provider that can deploy, operate and manage emerging technologies on their behalf.

It is becoming urgent for both enterprises and their service providers to transform their networks to take full advantage of mobility and to blend mobile services into the wider communications mix. Some are already ahead of the game.

Conclusion

Transforming networks and services to mobilize the enterprise is high on the wish list for CEOs seeking a return on their mobile investment and will foster efficiency, competitiveness and business growth while keeping costs under control.

Success will be based upon the ability of enterprises to transform their business by adopting the Managed Communications model and by moving to an “all-IP” network architecture.

Fixed and mobile service providers will continue to play a central role in the ongoing mobilization of the enterprise.

Nadia Mordelet is Vice President in charge of Strategic Planning and Business Development in Convergence/Multimedia and Payment Division, Alcatel-Lucent Paris, France.
Email: nadia.mordelet@alcatel-lucent.fr