

BYOD: Getting it Right

Three keys to implementing a successful Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program

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A great deal of (digital) ink has been spilled recently regarding Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) programs. Rich rewards are promised to companies that allow employees to use their personal mobile devices – smartphones, tablets, and even laptops – for work. As a result, our customers often ask us about BYOD. And it's not just us: a recent survey showed that 60% of organizations are considering adopting a BYOD program. We encourage companies that are exploring BYOD to consider the following three points.

DO IT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

The great attraction of BYOD is cost reduction. This is no empty promise: cost savings of 50% per employee are regularly achieved and savings of up to 70% are not unheard of. However, there are both ethical and pragmatic reasons against establishing cost reduction as the primary goal for implementing BYOD. First, it is inappropriate to mandate that employees use their personal assets for company business. Employees are reimbursed when they use their personal vehicle for company business; the same should apply when they use their personal device for company business.

Second, cost reduction isn't the most strategic benefit of BYOD. The primary benefit of BYOD programs to date has largely been employee satisfaction. Many employees have better technology at home and want to be able to use it at work. They are so keen that about 40% of eligible users will take advantage of a BYOD program even when there is no subsidy. BYOD empowers them to use what they feel to be the best tools for the job.

Another key benefit of BYOD is a more mobile workforce. Instead of simply pocketing the savings, many companies increase the penetration of mobile applications throughout their workforce. This allows companies to increase operational visibility and productivity across the entire enterprise, not just the small segment with company-issued devices. Gartner Chief of Mobility Research David Willis identifies this as the "game-changing" benefit of BYOD.

Finally, BYOD allows a company to adopt new technologies at the rapid pace of consumer markets. Consumer electronics have a replacement cycle of 24 months or even shorter, and BYOD enables the enterprise to take advantage of these quick refreshes.

In short, when considering adopting BYOD, it is vital to do it for the right reasons. Moving beyond mere cost reduction, the most successful BYOD implementations aim for greater employee satisfaction, more strategic use of mobile computing, and quicker technology refreshes.

AIM FOR SUCCESS

Like any technique or strategy, BYOD is not equally well-suited to every situation. In particular, three environmental factors can become obstacles to BYOD success. First, BYOD programs with low employee participation are inefficient. This may be the result of external factors, such as working in a jurisdiction where device subsidies are considered a taxable benefit, or internal factors, such as concerns about privacy or the expectation of working after hours. These factors reduce voluntary adoption of BYOD amongst employees and therefore limit the scope of the benefits described above.

BYOD is also unsuitable in situations where specific hardware requirements exist. Examples include when an enterprise application requires the ability to swipe credit cards, to rapidly scan multiple barcodes, to operate in extreme conditions (e.g. dust, cold, moisture, accidental drops onto hard surfaces), or to function beyond the limits of the battery life of consumer devices. Because of

these requirements, such business-critical applications call for specific hardware that employees will rarely own.

Another situation where BYOD may not be viable is when infrastructure upgrades introduce significant additional costs. The addition of significant numbers of mobile users may require infrastructure upgrades, such as broader Wi-Fi coverage throughout the enterprise. Software licensing costs may also increase, whether for new virtual desktops for mobile users to remote into, or for mobile device management (MDM) software.

Therefore, successful BYOD implementations have high employee participation, include applications with basic hardware requirements, and do not require significant investment in infrastructure or licensing. There are also ways to work around these limitations. Low employee participation can be overcome by offering a subsidy and by implementing a BYOD policy that relieves their concerns. Hardware requirements cannot be avoided, but not all applications will have those requirements. This opens the door for a hybrid strategy where mission-critical applications run on company-owned hardware while other mobile applications run on employee's personal devices. For example, a hospital may have its clinical software run on special mobile devices that can survive sterilization protocols, while the software nurses use to bid for shifts could be available on employee devices. Finally, while certain infrastructure and software licensing costs are unavoidable, careful exploration of per-user licensing options (as opposed to per-device) may offer cost savings.

HAVE A WELL-DESIGNED POLICY

The most important part of BYOD adoption is policy definition. A clear and complete policy will facilitate participation in the program and help evaluate its success, while an inadequate policy will impede the program or even lead to its failure. Worst of all is having no mobile device policy at all – a situation that exists in an alarming 32% of companies today.

When crafting a BYOD policy it is important to get help. Gartner provides a template for such policies, but the main issues that need to be addressed by a BYOD policy include the following:

- Who can participate in the program? How does one enroll?
- What subsidy will be offered, and how? It is not recommended to subsidize the purchase of the device, but rather offer a monthly subsidy to help cover the costs of service charges. Typical reimbursement plans range between \$30 and \$45 a month, and can be offered in the form of a stipend or an expense reimbursement. Remember, however, that these are not the only costs for the program. Software and infrastructure upgrades are estimated to cost \$10 per employee per month today, growing to \$25 per employee per month by 2015. This increase is expected to be offset by drops in the price of services (thereby reducing the subsidy).
- What devices are allowed? You can use the subsidy to encourage the use of preferred devices.
- What technical support is offered, and how? You can also use different levels of support to encourage the use of preferred devices.
- How will enterprise data on the device be secured? How will the privacy of employee personal data and activity be ensured? Remember the data security goes both ways: enterprise data must be protected, but personal data also must be safeguarded from access by the company.
- What expectations does the company have for the employee to work after-hours?
- If the company is involved in litigation, what data on the employee's device is subject to seizure under e-discovery?
- What are the rules for appropriate use of company data and resources, and what penalties are there for violating these rules?
- How is data removed from the device when the employee leaves the company, and how is the phone number transitioned?

A BYOD program can be a great benefit to an enterprise, increasing employee satisfaction and productivity. But these benefits can only be realized if the right conditions exist and a solid policy governs the program.

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