

## **BYOD Policies are Changing as Mobility Becomes a Critical Factor in Organisational Efficiency and Profitability**

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In a recent Chief Information Officers (CIO) survey <sup>1</sup>conducted in Middle East, India and Africa, when asked what will be the 'next big thing' that will impact the role of the CIO the resounding answer was mobility. Not only does mobility drive efficiencies, it also causes a major shift in IT structures and cost saving strategies. Bring your own device (BYOD) is one such strategy that can support the mobility of the workforce and it represents a key approach for reducing costs and infrastructure.

BYOD is characterised by organisations who invite their staff to use their own mobile devices like tablets, smartphones and notebooks to access company information. It is part of the consumerization of IT that describes the infiltration of technological trends from the personal sphere into the business sphere. Examples of this are web based email, online data storage and social networking. Users then take their mobile device, apps and online accounts into the workplace. Tech savvy organisations are now looking at these personal devices as the future of mobility at a fraction of the cost of previous methods.

A recent worldwide study, conducted by IDC Manufacturing Insights<sup>2</sup>, amongst over 460 enterprises across multiple sectors including industrial machinery and equipment, high-tech and metal fabrication, and covering 13 countries worldwide, showed that their top business initiatives are focused on growth and differentiation through value-added services and improved customer experience. Responding to customers with speed and efficiency through strategies such as BYOD plays a critical role in achieving these objectives.

The main benefit of BYOD for employers is the improvement in workplace productivity; less hardware is needed and telecoms expenditure will be lower. BYOD makes it possible for employees to work remotely, from any location where they have connectivity. In South Africa, it is not so much the employee's mind-set that needs to change favourably towards BYOD, but more the employer.

The cost of acquiring tablet devices is high and the risk associated with supplying them is great due to theft and loss. Many employees already have their own device, and this is driving businesses to review their BYOD strategy. A lot of companies who are implementing a BYOD strategy are doing so for field workers such as sales representatives and executives who travel for business.

In emerging markets such as South Africa, more than 70% of employees who own a smartphone or tablet confirm using it for work. But less than 30% of enterprises say they support any employee-owned smartphones or tablets. Many South African businesses are yet to embrace the concept and the benefits of a BYOD strategy while all the major enterprise resource planning (ERP) players in the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.epicor.com/mena/Company/PressRoom/Pages/MRCPR/Epicor-CIO-Survey-Results-MEAI-NR-010714.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> IDC Manufacturing Insights white paper, "Get Customers Inspired: How Modern ERP Can Support Greater Customer Experience," by Pierfrancesco Manenti (May 2013)

market are gearing up for BOYD. Many already have clients with limited functionality for the most popular mobile device operating systems<sup>3</sup>.

One of the biggest concerns that employers have about BYOD is data security, however, this need not be a concern when an organisation has proven business software in place with built-in security measures and specific requirements for employees.

Devices should only be allowed to connect when they provide sufficient levels of anti-virus and malware protection and as a result some businesses provide such software for staff members' devices.

Another concern for employers is that mobile devices are highly prone to loss, so controls that enable the remote wiping of corporate data and any such data should be held in encrypted partitions. Then, interactions with corporate data should be logged and controlled with a clear understanding among data security and governance staff of what data is being made available and where it is made available.

New staff appointments and termination of employment processes also require careful consideration. Fine-grained removal of data from devices is essential. New techniques for data partitioning and grooming from mobile devices are being developed to help with this.

New technology and tools that are coming out to help with these issues is called Desktop as a Service or DaaS. This is not to be confused with Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) which has been out for a while. With virtual desktops and applications in the cloud, you get all the benefits of desktop virtualization without the headaches. Even better, you can leave the hardware, software, SLA's and performance worries to the cloud provider. Optimal performance is maintained because you're leveraging a global network of data centres, thus providing you with easier deployment, secure data and applications, and better performance.

The next question is how to compensate an employee for data as part of an organisation's BYOD policy. The best way to do this is for employees to complete an expense claim form for their home internet usage as well as cell phone costs associated with business usage. The employee should obtain their device by taking out a contract with one of the cellular providers, paying for it on a monthly basis and then submitting the cost of monthly business usage as part of their expense claim. Some organisations opt to make a small contribution to the cost of the device while others opt not to. Every company will decide on their own strategy, if any, for the implement of BYOD based on their needs and the needs of their employees.

BYOD will never be as straightforward as today's IT service model where approved and known hardware is provided and data carefully managed in a controlled environment. It requires a more complex IT backbone with greater management demands, however, the benefits that it offers in

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<sup>3</sup> White Paper: The Future of Unified Communications & Collaboration", Dimension Data and Ovum, South Africa, 2013.



terms of improved efficiencies and cost savings make it a very attractive offering for tech savvy organisations with the right business software in place.

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