The Five Questions Business Managers Need to Talk to IT about Faster Enterprise Mobility
You know your smartphone has incredible power in your personal life. So why can’t you have that same power in your professional life? In a business context, the mobile industry is still in its infancy. Even with the consumerization of IT, enterprise mobility has a way to go to catch up to the robust productivity capabilities of the consumer world.

So how do you get there? Do you build; do you buy; do you wait? Your employees, well aware of the competitive advantage they’re missing out on, will get restless if you don’t act fast enough. And depending on what you read, this is already happening. One survey\(^1\) revealed two in five employees think their IT department is too inundated with requests to deal with theirs.

More than half of employees are either very or somewhat likely to look for a free or available online solution before seeking a product approved by the business. Another study, of 1200 employees\(^2\), showed more than a quarter would consider making their own apps for work without any business involvement. More than half believe their IT department is too inundated with requests to deal with theirs.

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However... you are fully aware that it’s not a good idea to use consumer-based apps at work because of security reasons, yet that’s what your employees are resorting to, trying to get work done, do more with less, or gain a competitive edge. It’s in both you and your employees’ best interests to get an approved solution – but getting your IT department on board will require some legwork on your part.

A recent survey\(^3\) found 60% of organizations are creating their own apps to support core business processes. Asking your IT department to build you an app is unlikely to succeed if you don’t have the business case (and sometimes the budget) to support it. To get what you want, you need to find a way to move your app request closer to the top of the IT priority list. To do that, you need to find the right people and present them the right information.

Companies organize IT in different ways; a distributed IT model, where each line of business has its own captive IT organization, which is fully-funded by line of business; a centralized IT model, where everyone in IT is in one group and line of businesses, competing with each other, pay in to fund IT; or a hybrid model, where some projects are centralized inside the group. Find out which model your organization uses, and find the appropriate contact. Your first contact point in IT will aim to judge your project on its merits, so you’d better be prepared with answers to what will most likely be their top five questions.

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1. www.k2.com/files/9531
Here’s what you need to know before your meeting with IT takes place.

1. Who’s sponsoring this project?

This question is the acid test on which all projects hang. An active executive sponsor helps demonstrate that your project is a priority. If your answer to this question is ‘there is no executive sponsor for this’, or your answer implies your project is a low-level business initiative with little weight behind it, it’s already game over. IT will shut it off early and rightly so; there are simply more important projects to address.

The truth is, IT does want to help you out. But there’s a reason IT is traditionally called the department of “no.” With each project that comes in, IT has to work out where it fits into the bigger picture. And more often than not, requests don’t fit well if at all. IT gets a non-stop set of ‘do more, do more, do more’ requests, so prioritization is a matter of survival.

The good news is that many IT organizations are trying to simplify IT investment priorities. Rather than looking at everything the same way, to be more nimble some IT organizations are separating the maintenance of current systems from incremental investments. But no matter how agile your IT team is, you’ll still need evidence that this project means something to the business long-term.

2. Is this IT’s problem?

Logically, it may seem like your IT team is the best people to go to, but the difference here, as we’ve seen, is that you are looking for mobile expertise – and right now, most companies handle that differently.

Increasingly, mobile is becoming its own department, and there are two ways companies seem to be addressing this new priority. You may have a chief mobility officer (CMoO) and ownership is spread across many groups. With this approach, it’s hard to make consistent, good decisions quickly and efficiently.

The alternative, a Mobile Centre of Excellence model with traditional IT at the forefront, is a more sensible approach. More and more work will go mobile in the coming years; so companies are going to continue to centralize its responsibility.

In short, IT will be involved but they may not be your first point of contact if you have an established protocol through a Mobile Centre of Excellence or a CMoO.

3. What is the risk involved?

For many IT departments, mobile is still quite new and they will tread cautiously into new territory to manage costs, resources, and security.

Be clear about your business needs and be willing to be flexible on requirements. Giving examples of how similar solutions have worked at similar companies will help you make a stronger business case. If you need to, lower some of your requirements to help IT take those first steps into this new territory. For example, if you want your mobile app to send financially-sensitive information out to many employees on widely-distributed devices, this may not be a good place to start. Perhaps you can suggest a phased approach that first distributes information to required employees, with later expansion to more users as IT and the business gain experience and comfort with the solution.
4. What can IT get from this?

Let’s face it: if you’re in IT, four in every five calls you receive is because something bad has happened. For IT, firefighting can only go so far. And when a new project gets rolled out, it may not work out like IT hopes. The truth behind IT project failures is that users hate change.

But every now and then, projects come along that offer a clear, positive result for IT relatively quickly. Some members of the IT team might not want to take it on as they see it as a big risk, but those who want to move along in their career will jump at the chance. Mobile, if done right and with the right planning, can be quick to implement and show impactful results like cost and time savings due to immediate and long-term productivity gains. This positive PR could be what gets your project a ‘yes’ answer.

5. How complex is my project going to be?

The answer to this is most likely: very. Mobile just isn’t about the device.

In the early days, companies would just buy something from BlackBerry which sorted out their email. Then the consumerization of IT came along, blurring the lines between business and personal devices as well as the seeing the rise in consumer-driven technology being demanded in the workplace. One of the primary reasons why mobile is so complex is because mobile apps and operating systems are always changing. Today’s employees expect to get app updates on their phone every week like they do in the consumer world. It’s safe to say that this pace of change is giving your IT department a persistent headache.

For most companies, if they have developers and IT, most of their developers work with a set of technologies they’re comfortable with. Chances are mobile isn’t one of them. Of the more than 26,000 developers who responded to the 2015 Stack Overflow Developer Survey, only 7% identified themselves first and foremost as mobile developers.

It’s pretty rare for companies to have developers who have done mobile development for any period of time, and even so, getting a mobile device connected to a backend system is another challenge. It’s rare enough to find somebody who knows the mobile side; it’s fewer people who have done much with the secure access side; and it’s typically entirely other set of people who know how to talk to a backend system. In other words – you’ll find a winning lottery ticket wrapped up in a four leaf clover before you find those skill sets in one person. You can either get a bunch of people working together and collaborating, which is typically slow and expensive, or you need to find a platform that takes care of it all for you.

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An agile mobile strategy is becoming more important to businesses by the day. If you move too slowly, your employees will start to look elsewhere – not just for consumer apps to get their jobs done, but potentially for other employers. Perhaps you’ve already tried and have had a few failed attempts. Getting IT on your side, iterating quickly (and perhaps failing and re-adjusting quicker), and ensuring enterprise security is critical. With an active sponsor, the right contact, and a good business case, technologies like Sitrion ONE are turning the risk and complexity of traditional mobile development into more of an opportunity for IT. With the right technology, a good business and IT partnership can unlock more of the power you see in your smartphone every day.

For more information visit:
www.sitrion.com

Conclusion

Most business users just want the result. They don’t care whether something is hard or new; they just want the results quickly, and to be able to change things to adapt to their needs. IT wants to be able to keep up with business needs, not be overburdened with projects, and ensure everything’s secure. Sitrion ONE gives both groups what they want.

Sitrion ONE is a complete solution. It takes away the complexity of enterprise mobility for you and your IT team – everything from providing one app on any Android, iOS, and, Windows Mobile device (yup, true BYOD); pre-built integrations to the enterprise applications you use every day like Exchange, SharePoint, SAP, Salesforce.com, etc; and out-of-the-box mobile use cases that address nearly 80% of the standard, simple use cases your employees need to get their work done.

The key to its success is its ability to mash up all the relevant items – for example, purchase order approvals and time off requests from SAP, calendar views and updates from Outlook, workflow notifications from SharePoint, the latest sales forecast from Salesforce.com – into one interactive, personalized productivity stream. The traditional paradigm is to mobilize application by application – but work is neither an application nor a place anymore. Sitrion ONE creates a productivity stream that allows employees to “do” their work via their mobile devices not just view their work.

Both IT and business users have something to gain with the adoption of this type of approach.

For more information visit:
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SAP Travel Request
15s
✓ Approved

SAP Inventory Check
23s
✓ Done

Salesforce CRM
Customer Lookup
40s
✓ Done

SharePoint
Project Task
60s
✓ Approved

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Sitrion ONE is an enterprise mobility solution that provides a secure, cloud-based BYOD environment to rapidly mobilize global workforces including pre-built integrations with SAP, SharePoint, Office 365 & Salesforce. Sitrion makes work better for millions of people by helping them get their jobs done better every day. In a complex business world, our software solutions enable every employee to stay engaged, make smart decisions, and be productive. ONE ... and done.