

COLUMNS

Getting the most from your mobile initiatives

September 7, 2012



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There is a pattern we have seen with marketers that have edged into enterprise mobile applications which holds promise, but falls short of exploiting the power of mobility.

The pattern goes like this: a company department lobbies for an enterprise mobile app, and the company commissions one to be built, or acquires a software platform to build it.

More often than not, that first app was internal—a business-to-employee, or B2E, app carrying out an important function such as giving salespeople access to information from a customer relationship management system.

The app works well, salespeople are more productive, and there is a sense of mission accomplished within the group and those involved within IT. But the rest of the company has not really experienced the advantages of a good B2E mobile app.

Platform issues

The benefits of these first apps tend to be departmental, and run the risk of becoming silos. Fortunately, in many companies, other groups learn about a useful mobile app, and soon want one of their own.

If the company used a mobile app platform to create its first B2E app, it has the foundation

to efficiently build one for another group—let us say the field service team.

Before long, the IT and company leadership realize that they have the tools to efficiently build, revise, and manage all sorts of mobile apps.

For companies that opted for a solid mobile app platform, this can be a bit of an “Ah-ha” moment. They realize that they have a repeatable advantage at their disposal.

We have often seen users of our mobile app development platform start with a B2E app for sales.

Before long, they have built one for channel partners, for customers who want access to their history or account information, or even customer-facing apps that do not touch the product, but make the consumer’s life easier while enhancing the brand.

These companies understand that with the right foundation in place, the only real limit on mobility is the creativity put into the business purpose for each app.

In short, do not let your first forays into mobility be one-off efforts.

Downloading on apps

To get the most from mobility, look to exploit the mobile platform you have in place from the start.

Those same sorts of platform features that will help you build that first app efficiently—configuration-based development without coding; one foundation that generates native code for multiple devices—will support a much broader mobile initiative.

We want to see more companies reach that breakthrough point where they realize that they have a foundation that puts few limits on what you can do with mobility.

And once you begin rolling out apps, there is a snowball effect in that you get more feedback from users, and are better able to pinpoint the business purpose for your next round of mobile apps.

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