

>> Realizing Rapid ROI Through Mobility

Companies are reaping the benefits from mobile CRM, field service and sales force automation processes with the latest Research In Motion (RIM) offerings. By Beth Schultz

As the global economy continues to stagnate, executive management is taking an ever-harder look at corporate expenditures. IT budget pressures and spending restrictions have turned the IT project approvals process into a major affair for many CIOs.

"In this down economy, most IT projects have to show measurable business benefits in the short term, meaning months instead of years, and costs must be low or come in small increments," says Gene Signorini, vice president, enterprise applications and mobile solutions, at Yankee Group, a Boston-based technology consulting firm.

Yet even as they grapple with how to do more with less money, IT executives must offer up new and different approaches for staying in touch with customers, improving worker productivity and, especially in this day and age, cutting costs. Enterprises large and small increasingly are finding the perfect answer in mobility.

Mobility initiatives typically don't require big spending, yet they provide substantial business gains in short order. "Mobility has an advantage in that many companies already have devices, services and infrastructure in place, and perceive it as a crucial technology for voice and mobile email. Adding capability on top of that can be done incrementally," Signorini says.

Mobilizing customer relationship management (CRM) applications is one natural next step beyond mobile email, as is outfitting field service representatives with smartphones capable of accessing necessary back-office applications. Current-generation devices, loaded with more memory and processing power

than earlier versions plus imaging and video capabilities, Global Positioning System (GPS)-based location services and Wi-Fi® support, easily handle demanding application environments. And with today's high-speed 3G wireless networks, application performance issues are disappearing, notes Tyler Lessard, director of ISV alliances and developer relations for RIM.

Building the Business Case

IT teams ratcheting up mobility deployments end up pleasing not only business users, but also the CFO. Here's one reason: They can show a rapid return on investment (ROI) in hard dollars with a simple shift in use policy. Savings can prove substantial when IT standardizes on one device type and negotiates a corporate plan with a single carrier rather than allowing employees to buy mobile devices on an individual basis, sign up for their own service plans, and charge back the costs, Signorini says.

A recent Yankee Group report shows the savings for a 125-person, U.S.-based business that went through such a consolidation at nearly \$100,000, or 50% of previous costs, he says. As part of this project, users received new BlackBerry® Curve™ smartphones integrated with corporate email and instant messaging; T-Mobile® provided service.

Such savings aren't just for small and medium businesses. Larger enterprises easily can replicate this model, a pretty smart move for any company taking mobility from maverick deployment to strategic undertaking, Signorini adds.

Mobility also quickly leads to softer, less tangible business benefits. These include business process improvements,

increased worker productivity, better customer responsiveness and creation of new revenue-generating opportunities.

Mobile Sales and Inventory Management

For example, sales teams widely report being able to do their jobs much more effectively when they can tap into enterprise CRM, sales force automation systems and other back-end systems remotely using mobile devices such as the BlackBerry® smartphone from RIM. With real-time access to account, inventory and order information, they can answer customer questions when asked and close deals more quickly.

At adidas America, an athletic gear maker in Portland, Ore., mobile device access to the enterprise order-entry and tracking system provided a much-needed boost in customer responsiveness, says Tim Oligmueller, sales force automation and tools

manager at the company. Sales reps already had their BlackBerry smartphones at the ready for email and phone calls, so throwing in CRM access was a natural extension of the tool, he adds.

The athletic gear maker developed a Java® application using BlackBerry® Mobile Data System (BlackBerry MDS), a free feature of BlackBerry® Enterprise Server that provides secure connections between wireless applications and back-end databases. The cost was nearly negligible, at around \$500 for a programming interface and 10 hours of development time, but the customer services benefits are outstanding, Oligmueller says.

Now when an adidas sales rep notices that a retail store doesn't have a pair of red soccer cleats on display, for example, the rep can fire up his or her BlackBerry Curve, view inventory status using style number, and send the customer an email, complete with

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— **Mario Kovacevic**, CIO, Americas, DTZ Barnicke

Mobility Trends: What's Headed to Your BlackBerry?

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE. Now that many C-level executives carry BlackBerry smartphones for email and voice, the next step is to provide access to business intelligence, such as daily sales reports and quarterly financials.

CONTEXT AWARENESS. Look for leading-edge enterprises to begin incorporating contextual data into their mobile applications with a goal of streamlining business processes and increasing business agility. This includes location and presence, often available through a calendar application.

DESKTOP VIEW. Various third-party solutions for BlackBerry smartphones, including PCNow from Cisco's WebEx unit, enable BlackBerry users to access files and folders stored on PC hard drives, and search their PCs with desktop search products.

SOCIAL NETWORKING. As employees seek new ways of always being available to customers and business partners, enterprises will have to support social networking applications on smartphones. These will range from chatting to multimedia sharing.

links to images of the shoe, of the order just placed.

Since rolling out BlackBerry smartphone access to the order-entry and tracking system, adidas has watched the soft benefits accrue, Oligmueller says. Sales reps have gotten more productive, revenue opportunities have grown with the ease of on-the-spot purchasing, and customer service reps have more time to spend on customer inquiries since they're not taking calls from sales reps asking to chase down inventory data for a customer.

Sales agents have gotten so attuned to mobile CRM that they approach any business process knowing they can get to the right data via their mobile device as the need arises, Kovacevic says. "We've built a critical mass around mobility, and not only do we get ROI but wonderful diversity through this channel," he adds.

Field Service Savings

Field service operations are reaping similar soft benefits, but also tallying hard savings, too.

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Real-Time Results

Besides soft benefits such as those seen at adidas America, many companies also report getting more out of their CRM investment when sales reps can access the system in real time via their BlackBerry smartphones. When CRM is not mobility-enabled, sales reps tend to update customer information once daily or, oftentimes, only once a week. With real-time access to CRM systems, sales reps are updating customer information multiple times a day.

For longtime RIM customer DTZ Barnicke, a merger between Canada-based commercial real estate firm J.J. Barnicke and DTZ, a U.K.-based global real estate advisor, mobilizing CRM has proved invaluable in improving communications and collaboration while delivering measurable returns, says Mario Kovacevic, CIO, Americas, for the company. While out and about with clients, real estate agents can access CRM data, plus property information such as size, cost per square foot and amenities, in real time via their BlackBerry smartphones.

RIM identifies field service operations as any high-touch, service-based organization that is hired to deliver, install, service and do maintenance work either at a customer premises or internally. Field service operations organizations have five main goals: Get more work done; get paid faster for that work; get the payroll correct for nonsalaried employees; keep operational costs down; and keep customers, be they internal or external, happy. Naturally, mobilizing field service operations can help across the board.

GPS location services on BlackBerry smartphones are proving particularly beneficial in field service operations, says RIM's Lessard. "Companies are dispatching jobs based on who is closest to a service location, and pushing out jobs immediately to their BlackBerry smartphones in the field. In many cases this means each technician can complete more jobs in a given day. This is a big benefit," Lessard says.

Getting technicians on-site more quickly, in turn, shortens the amount of time trouble tickets are open and improves the

customer relationship. These soft benefits play out time and again for BlackBerry solution customers.

For example, the city of Hamilton, in Ontario, reports increasing work-order closure rates from 50% to 90% annually by pushing those jobs out from a back-end database to BlackBerry smartphones. It also has lowered travel costs by assigning jobs at its 700 buildings and 3,000 properties based on geography, and reports a 28% increase in reporting from the field.

Alabama Gas Corp., in Birmingham, Ala., says it completes as many as 300 extra calls per day since migrating from a paper-based system for dispatching and tracking service mechanics to an automated system that delivers work orders to BlackBerry smartphones.

Support calls were also drastically reduced at We Care Home Health Services, a large, independently owned home care services provider in Toronto. The company reports slashing the number of calls from care coordinators to personal support workers from 145 to 72 per week. Rather than waiting for calls, support staff can accept shifts on their BlackBerry smartphones, now outfitted with remote access to the company's time and attendance system. Also, the staff is more productive, with the ability to chart visit information and log time spent on the spot. The company eliminated virtually all paperwork from these processes.

Looking Ahead

Overall, Lessard says, BlackBerry deployments reflect a growing trend to view mobility as a core part of IT projects rather than as an afterthought. This is a shift from as little as two years ago, when companies would typically deploy a CRM, field service or sales force application for the desktop, then try to figure out how to make it mobile.

Yankee Group's Signorini calls this the evolution from opportunistic to strategic to holistic mobility. In opportunistic mobility scenarios, point solutions address the needs of specific classes of employees. Users heavily influence mobility decisions, and architectures are of limited extendability. As companies get

more strategic about mobility, they begin to address the needs of larger subsets of workers, build a common architecture for mobility, implement policy-driven processes, and start using sophisticated administration and management tools. In strategic mobility deployments, companies also begin to embrace voice, data and integrated services.

Ultimately, he says, companies move to a holistic mobility environment. Here, mobility is integrated into most business and IT processes, for both internal- and external-facing activities; influences work behaviors; and provides ubiquitous connectivity.

Such is already the case at DTZ Barnicke, where mobility is part and parcel of everything IT does today. "Our end users still have desktops and notebooks, but at the time of deploying every end-user application we are absolutely factoring in the BlackBerry solutions form factor," Kovacevic says.

Already, DTZ Barnicke sales reps can access 75% of core business applications in North America from their BlackBerry smartphones. The remaining 25% of applications aren't meaningful in the mobile experience today, Kovacevic notes.

By blending mobility into the IT framework, Kovacevic's team has reduced development time and marginalized costs for mobility initiatives. And that gives the company competitive advantage, one of those great soft benefits mobility is so good at providing.

"A key difference between us and our competitors," Kovacevic says, "is that we have been active at this for a long time. So what we have is a very mature understanding of what mobility can bring to the business, and the business inherently understands mobility. This isn't about having better sales force automation applications, but about understanding how to continue leveraging mobility in unique ways."

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