Digital Transformation Monitor

Mobile and mobility: new opportunities to improve customer engagement

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Mobile technology and mobility largely adopted in consumers daily life have been brought to the business sphere meeting employees’ requirements to work anytime anywhere from any device in the same conditions as at the office. They drive new ways of working, improving productivity and sales performance. The technologies also give companies the opportunity to improve their customer relationship by increasing their interactions.

1 Mobile consumerisation serving business

Mobile technology covers a broad scope and refers to the use of mobile devices in a mobility situation. Typically, mobile devices refer to smartphones, tablets, laptops and wearables, and support different forms of communication through the use of websites and applications specifically designed for mobile devices. Mobility now is about the ability to access and to use information and communications services no matter the physical location – at home, commuting, or at a customer’s office.

The undeniable increase of interest and the strong adoption of mobile and mobility by consumers in their private lives’ have naturally led to the use of those mobile technologies in the corporate sphere.

Mobility allowing for new ways of working

Mobility is seen as a disruptive technology for business purposes as it allows new ways of working in an ATA(WAD (Anytime Anywhere Any Device) environment thanks to the combination of the availability of high speed wireless networks as well as the development of cloud computing and featured devices.

Mobile technology meets with employees’ requirements to work away from the desk office while having access to internal resources.

Being able to connect to the company’s internal system while outside the office allows employees to be more efficient and more productive as they can reach and provide corporate information instantaneously from anywhere in a secure environment.

Adapting to mobile technologies is becoming crucial for businesses

Consumers increasingly pushing IT department’s into supporting consumer tools in the business environment, IT departments are being faced with an increasing number of challenges regarding the number of devices to manage and differing IT systems. At the same time, this push is being further influenced by the acceptance of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) in some enterprises which contributes to the evolution of the entreprise’s mobility strategy.

Mobile platforms are thus being adapted to support corporate requirements. Some mobile platforms include capabilities such as VPN (Virtual Private Networks), Mobile Device Management (MDM) and all support for corporate applications.

Organisations will invest over EUR 1.1 trillion by 2019 in mobile technologies

Source: IDC

Corporate applications can be used from anywhere

Source: IDATE

The uptake of mobile technology in the business space

Increasing interest for tablets

The penetration of mobile devices in the business environment has been increasing. According to IDC, more than half of all European companies had adopted more than one mobile device on average in 2012. The use of tablets in business has also increased as they have been optimized for business functions and applications. A IDC European multiclient study found that for 40% of respondents, tablets are the only business devices used for employees and that this share is expected to increase.
Specific applications to increase employee productivity and customer engagement

Basic applications to check corporate messages and access the Internet were the first main applications on mobile devices. With an established approach of mobile and mobility, companies are focusing on other applications impacting business performance. Customer business applications are especially designed to mobilise key processes aimed at improving employee productivity, accelerate the process and increase customer engagement.

Mobility benefits for employees and customers

Improving employee productivity

Many companies expect to perceive important gains when introducing the mobility concept into their business. Process efficiency and employee productivity are expected to increase thanks to employees' access to real time information and accurate data. Mobility allows employees to be linked to the office network when being out of office in order to access customer databases or accounting systems.

Simultaneously the elimination of manual processes (eg. writing reports) helps in increasing productivity while minimizing human error and reducing paper consumption. Mobility also leads to greater work flexibility which favours employees’ work-life balance.

Improving employee efficiency in the supply chain

When coming to production and the supply chain, mobility and mobile applications are seen as crucial as they allow employees to access asset information in real-time no matter where they are. As part of day to day operations, mobility also drives the move away from paper-based processes to IT tools.

Typically, the combination of mobile devices combined with sensors or barcoding can help in asset and inventory management reducing the possibility of mistakes as well as the time effort needed to complete an accurate stock status.

According to a Motorola report, enterprise mobility solutions can increase inventory turns by 15% and employee productivity by 25%. Mobile devices allow for the easy updating of inventories as a real-time view of the inventory can be captured so that companies know in real time where their products are.

Mobility can also improve collaboration between supply chain players, allowing for a quick exchange of relevant information between the various stakeholders in the process and thus allowing for a smooth work flow, real-time access to data and accurate monitoring.

Improving customer engagement

The use of mobile systems increases businesses’ interaction with the final client providing them with a better level of customer service, reducing their time of service delivery and improving their degree of personalisation.

Indeed, mobile applications can help businesses deliver an innovative experience to their customers. When observing consumers behavior, their smartphones are often their closest channel of influence. Is its thus becoming necessary for enterprises to develop mobile applications and mobile websites in order to interact with customers. Push notifications, emails or SMS rank among the top customer engagement forms offered by mobile and mobility technologies.

The downsides of the mobility trend

Security and privacy remain major concerns for customers and employees

Many are worried that companies might get access to customers’ or employees’ private information, thus violating their privacy. This concern is becoming increasingly central with the growing BYOD trend which mixes personal and corporate information. Some information might simply be considered too personal for consumers to want to share it (eg. information relating to one’s healthcare).
Employees might require some training

While companies implement mobile and mobility in order to improve employees' productivity, some may require additional IT training in order to promote the effective use of mobile devices. Especially SMEs might find that their employees lack the necessary IT skills to easily implement mobility solutions.

Changing customer interaction

Business opportunities - sales

Investment in mobile technology – crucial to increasing sales

Mobile technology has become a new way to interact with customers as smartphones and tablets become their preferred communication channels. Indeed, as customers change their behaviour with the development of digital technology, there is a clear opportunity for enterprises to strengthen their relationship with their customers through mobile applications. In order to do so effectively, enterprises need to invest in applications and websites designed for mobile devices.

Mobile applications could be developed to:
• share corporate information and companies’ solutions,
• sell companies’ products,
• provide access to the customer service support, etc.

As illustrated in the figure above, the automotive industry provides a myriad of mobile applications aimed at interacting with the customer regarding the vehicle production, sales, maintenance, insurance and even entertainment.

In the retail sector as well the use of mobile technology to interact with consumers is becoming critical for conventional players to provide an omni-channel offer and thus increase their sales.

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Mobile apps in retail

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Mobile technologies adapted to the needs of sales representatives

Mobile devices are especially useful to sales representatives as they provide them with greater flexibility and allow them to save time as well as costs related to their business activity.

Salespeople spend most of their time outside the office on the road. Smartphones allow them to easily check their messages, find their way, access their schedule and check customer data. Tablets on the other hand are very convenient to present services or products to customers and to simultaneously check the inventory.
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Improving sales performance

With the increased use of mobile technologies by companies, businesses have to adapt their Customer Relationship Management (CRM). As sales people gain access to key information anywhere and at any time, they can increase their sales performance by accessing product information and availability quickly, as well as by keeping track of orders, updating sales information, and verifying client details.

An innovative store can provide businesses with a high degree of service personalisation for customers. A digital showroom initiative has been launched by Audi, for example, displaying four models and providing customers with the option to personalise their car in a million different ways through applications interacting between tablets, video walls and tablet surfaces. This new approach has increased the company’s sale of new cars by 60% to 70%.

Path to purchase scenario has evolved around mobile devices

Customer satisfaction due to higher interaction

Mobility not only increases the visibility of industries through corporate applications, but it also creates many new opportunities for companies to improve customer satisfaction.

In the automotive industry for example, many mobile apps have been developed providing technical and navigation information as well as infotainment in order to provide customers with relevant services. Opel is one of the automakers supplying such a wide range of applications with its MyOpel app, a mobile assistant app including an interactive manual, maintenance service reminders, emergency procedure descriptions, connections to social network, as well as applications dedicated to the monitoring of the driving performance, energy consumption and battery usage.

In the healthcare industry, where mobile devices have also a strong influence on the relationship between the doctor and the patient, smartphones and tablets can be used as interfaces for healthcare monitoring of different indicators related to chronic diseases. Patients increasingly may become active participants or even apprentices in their own health.

Customer purchase behaviour analysis

The multiplication of communication channels has significantly expanded the company’s interaction with the customer. This greater connectivity provides businesses with a better analysis of customer purchase behaviour, information crucial to companies’ sustainability. This information allows businesses to adapt their offerings to their customers’ needs and gives them the opportunity to be proactive. In the retail industry for example, geo-fencing is the key technology for customer interactive services. The concept relies on the use of mobile applications that trigger an alert when the customer passes through an area. The detection of a customer’s presence can be used by a retailer to push advertisements and discounts while tracking their habits.

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About the Digital Transformation Monitor

The Digital Transformation Monitor aims to foster the knowledge base on the state of play and evolution of digital transformation in Europe. The site provides a monitoring mechanism to examine key trends in digital transformation. It offers a unique insight into statistics and initiatives to support digital transformation, as well as reports on key industrial and technological opportunities, challenges and policy initiatives related to digital transformation.


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