

Mobile Business Blindspot!

Survey of 200 UK enterprises finds lack of skills impacting success of mobile business strategies

Despite the trend towards business mobility, many UK enterprises lack the expertise needed to implement a comprehensive mobile strategy according to the findings of a new survey from Cognito. 86% of IT departments have been charged with the responsibility of implementing a mobile strategy to help improve employee productivity and business efficiency. However, nearly a half of IT directors say that their team lacks the skills needed to integrate a range of business critical applications with mobile devices. More worryingly, 1 in 4 blamed the potential failure of mobile projects on the mobile industry's lack of experience in supporting business customers.

"This is a reality check for mobile IT in the UK. Whilst there have been significant advances made in mobile applications, hardware and networks, successfully applying these to complex business scenarios requires an emerging set of skills that organisations do not typically possess," said Steve Alderson, Managing Director at mobile systems integrator Cognito. "When enterprise level IT departments that command significant budgets are struggling, we've no doubt that smaller teams with fewer resources will find it even more difficult to support a comprehensive mobile business strategy. As a result, companies are only able to go as far as implementing mobile email using one of many off-the-shelf solutions on the market."

Indeed, according to the survey only a half of UK enterprises today have a mobile strategy that goes beyond basic email. However, for businesses that depend on employees working out in the field, email is just one of many business critical applications. For example, a delivery driver or salesman out on the road would benefit from direct access to a CRM database. An effective mobile strategy requires these workers to have an equivalent standard of IT to employees in the office. Unfortunately for businesses that do plan to go beyond email, the survey uncovered a major concern: A third of IT directors said they were worried that their company's lack of experience in mobile IT strategies would significantly impact the ROI from these projects in the near term and reduce long-term investment in this area.

Alderson continues, "the greatest rewards from implementing mobile technology are usually across business critical functions where a high degree of automation and control is required. These applications are increasingly complex, involving the integration of complementary mobile and service optimisation technologies with existing legacy systems; technologies which are new to most IT departments. Hence, as this survey has indicated, IT buyers are worried that both their own inexperience and that of their suppliers will hamper success."

Sumair Dutta, Strategic Service Management Analyst at Aberdeen Group confirmed how this survey reflected some of his observations on mobility: "Organisations with field service operations in particular are still looking to make investments in mobility despite tough economic times. This is because greater mobility can make these companies more productive. In fact, we have found that companies that are able to adopt a best practice approach can improve productivity by nearly 20 percent. So it's quite worrying to see how mobility is being held back by a lack of experience on the part of both IT departments and suppliers in general."

The survey of 200 IT directors from organisations with over 1000 employees was conducted by Vanson Bourne.

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About Cognito: As the market leading expert in Mobile Workforce Management systems and practices, Cognito provides consultancy, solutions and services to organisations with task-oriented field workers, enabling them to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. Cognito customers include Anglian Water, CitySprint, Dalkia, Carillion Planned Maintenance, Konica Minolta, Lorne Stewart, npower hometeam, Peterborough City Council, telent and Volvo CE. www.cognitomobile.com