

## Pointing the way to mobile success

Anton du Preez - December 02, 2003

### **Mobile technology can revolutionise business efficiency, enhance your competitive stance and increase return on investment.**

By integrating mobile systems into your business processes, you can take action according to what happens at the most critical point - where the workers do their jobs and link with customers.

But before you rush to invest in the latest systems, a word of caution: choose your mobile supplier with care. Consider your requirements, explore all options and ensure that the supplier can meet your individual business needs. Take time to look at the key points, and the road to mobile success can be smoother.

Choose a specialist that can point out what is necessary and what is not, and suggest a range of options that can make an impact on the successful running of your operations.

This is an area where specialist skills can make a difference. The company should also understand standards, such as 802.11, Wired Equivalent Privacy (the 802.11 encryption protocol), wireless security and radio frequency identification.

The mobile solution must integrate seamlessly with all of your existing systems, from hand-held devices through to back-end databases. Ensure that the supplier can integrate your existing data and systems with the new mobile technology.

It's also worth working through the company data and deciding what you need for the future. Older companies may have a lot of older data that is no longer necessary.

And don't forget security, particularly if your data application carries sensitive information. A security policy is just as critical for mobile applications as it is for fixed networks.

Forward-thinking companies, in partnership with mobile resellers that understand the business-critical issues, will be able to assess the risks and take steps to counter them.

The first key component for success is the mobile device. This can range from PDAs for executives to robust task-specific devices for the shop floor, but each must deliver the information required within that role quickly.

Second, consider the software application the device uses. This must fit existing business processes to allow a co-ordinated approach, supporting the systems in place.

Finally, make sure that the mobile solution you choose shows flexibility in data gathering devices, and allows you to upgrade as newer platforms emerge. In other words, be sure you can enhance the system as your business develops.

Bespoke development of mobile application software is costly. As with anything a solution tailor-made to your requirements will incur higher development and installation costs.

Choose a supplier that has a tool-kit that will give you the functionality you need to get up and running out-of-the-box. This will help you to get rolling quickly. You can then tailor the application to meet your demands.

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