



Managed Mobility: Do Platforms and Services Meet Business Requirements?

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Summary

Issue/Analytical Summary

Approximately 8-10 years ago, when mobile devices first began to be used as serious business tools, there was a need in the market for tools to rein in costs for voice calls and email/data usage, especially for companies that had employees that traveled overseas and were suffering from roaming "bill shock". As the number and power of mobile devices in the workplace increased exponentially, companies also began to require more sophisticated platforms to implement security policies, set up passwords and device encryption, remotely lock and unlock devices that were lost or compromised, and configure and manage applications Over-The-Air. The core elements of Managed Mobility Services (MMS) from operators and IT Service Providers to deal with these issues were (and remain) Telecom

Expense Management (TEM) solutions and Mobile Device Management (MDM) solutions, generally sourced from 3rd parties, but enhanced with unique service wraps, tiered service options, and custom or standardized consulting engagements to help companies with key issues such as mobile policy and security management, mobile service plan optimization, and BYOD implementation.

The needs of businesses continue to evolve as mobility becomes increasingly entrenched in business processes and IT systems. What are the current requirements for managed mobility; and how are service providers and platform vendors enhancing their services and software to accommodate these new requirements?

Key Takeways

Enterprises have shifted from a focus on mobile device management to a focus on management and security of mobile applications and data.

Businesses are also sourcing and/or developing mobile applications to meet their unique requirements and often go to 3rd parties for tools and services for application development.

MMS portfolios have adapted by adding security capabilities such as real time threat management and app containerization, as well as application development tools, app stores, and content management.

Telecom expense management solutions have also expanded to help businesses manage costs for both fixed and mobile telecoms, along with expenses for cloud/hosting, asset management and other IT services.

Perspective

Current perspective

The requirements of businesses leveraging mobile technology for voice and data communications, email, remote application and database access, Internet/ Intranet access, Unified Communications and other key functions continue to evolve and expand. Today's powerful sophisticated mobile devices are essentially computers that require the same kind of security as a connected laptop or desktop computer. MMS portfolios have expanded beyond the password protection and device lock of early MDM platforms, with more comprehensive security to meet these needs. At the same time business applications loaded on

mobile devices or allowing access to remote corporate apps or databases are on the rise, requiring MMS providers to add more capabilities to help businesses develop, manage and secure applications. Expense management has also changed as companies want to optimize their spending across different services, not just mobile voice and data plans. These new requirements have affected the vendor, operator and IT service provider ecosystem as they offer updated MMS solutions.

TEM Expansion.

TEM platforms used to provide either fixed or mobile expense management, using static snapshots of billing data and usage. These capabilities have evolved to include both fixed and mobile expenses, and now offer visibility into near real time usage data. TEM vendors have also added expense management for cloud/hosting/UC and other IT services. TEM providers also generally provide carrier/vendor sourcing and plan optimization services.

MDM Evolution.

As businesses go beyond device management to Enterprise Mobility Management (EMM), with a focus on applications and data, vendors have added a broad range of options. For example, Mobile Application Management may provide app discovery, publishing and license management, plus automated configuration of app settings and policies. Per-app VPNs allow access to corporate applications without having to go through the corporate network. FIPS 140-2 cryptography may be used to secure data, while containerization separates business and personal data for users of BYOD devices.

Service Provider Expansion.

IT Service Providers and operators may resell 3rd party TEM and EMM platforms and add on other capabilities. For example, they may offer real time threat management, and support for mobility within unified communications (UCaaS) services. They also provide tiered service options with increasingly more expansive capabilities for security or support. They may also bundle devices, connectivity, TEM and MDM to offer a better price and more convenience. Consulting to provide guidance on mobile policies, mobile security, and process optimization through mobile technology is common, as is systems integration which provides additional software and hardware solutions to businesses that are aligned with their mobile applications.

Mobile App Development Focus.

Service providers initially provided Mobile Enterprise Application (MEAP) services, to help businesses develop their own applications leveraging middleware tools from companies such as SAP or Antenna Software. Today they have become more directly involved with apps, offering custom development as well as tools such as Mobile Back-End as a Service (MBaaS) to facilitate connection of mobile devices/apps to backend corporate/ERP systems and databases. Many have acquired expertise in UX tools to improve the user interface and customer experience. Mobile apps support not only traditional B2B functions for employees or business partners but also B2C apps that allow businesses to better serve and communicate with their end-customers.

Recommended Actions

Buyer Actions

Australian enterprise businesses are pivoting to the use of mobility technologies to drive more flexible and remote working, there is an increasing appetite to build a mobile-first strategy within the organization and expand the use of the technology to better engage with customers. This is a call for service providers to be able to provide stronger integration into back-end systems, whether ERP systems or handing over a session which initiated on a self-service channel to a live contact center agent. This is also a call for service providers to design a 'mobile first' strategy spanning across the domains of technology, people and business process.

Enterprises should look to operators that already provide them with voice and data plans as service providers are anxious to add more value – operators often offer bill-through packaged mobile applications for diverse business processes and verticals but they will also help enterprise developers to optimize their own apps, by providing middleware tools as well as APIs into network enablers such as messaging and location data to add value to business development efforts.

Service providers offering Unified Communications and Collaboration as a Service are integrating mobility as an integral part of their solutions. Businesses can buy platforms from vendors but can also go to their mobile operators and IT service providers for end to end solutions that leverage mobile access aimed at including remote and traveling employees in company meetings, videoconferencing sessions, training sessions, and events.



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