

FieldVision

White Paper

Maximizing B2B Sales with Mobile Tablets

Uncovering the Real Business Value of
Mobile Devices for B2B Businesses

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The Trend

Mobile is the fastest growing technology today, with mobile devices set to beat other kinds of computers as the primary device for Internet access between 2013 and 2015. According to predictions from Transparency Market Research, tablet sales are expected to grow 38.8% and hit approximately 248.6 million units sold by 2015. As well-known venture capitalist Mary Meeker stated, “We are in the early innings of a massive phenomenon.”

While mobile may have started out as a consumer device, the technology is now growing at break-neck speed in the business sector. Mobile is recording the fastest rates of adoption that the business world has ever witnessed. According to B2B marketing specialist CK Kerley, 72% of the US workforce is already mobile; 64% of decision makers read email on mobile devices; and 70% of executives under 40 use mobile as the primary tool for communication.

At the same, mobile adoption in the business sector is still in its infancy. According to the International Data Corporation, enterprise mobile users will reach 1.9 billion by 2013.

Mobile technology has placed B2B business squarely at a crossroads. The first step, the most important step, is to take the new technology seriously. The rewards will go to those who maneuver now, moving carefully to adopt successful, mobile-first positions.

A decision to implement mobile devices comprehensively is likely to be one of the most significant choices you can make for your business this year. Leveraged correctly, mobile devices offer real business value for B2B – a change in thinking leading to company growth and increased sales. In the current climate of mobile revolution, those who develop a smart strategy for mobile adoption may soon be watching some of their less savvy competitors fall behind.

Why Mobile?

For business use, the advantages of the tablet over any of the existing alternatives are fairly obvious – even to a novice user: The tablet is comfortable, small enough to carry but large enough to

be appealing as a workspace. It's intuitive and easy to use. It's green, reducing paper waste while saving on printing and shipping costs. And it's a pleasure; employees love using it.

Because of their incredible popularity and inherent appeal, tablets and other types of mobile devices are now surfacing in every possible industry, with an ever-growing range of uses. At trade-shows, for example, tablets are being used by sales teams to engage customers and even get real-time feedback on which new product introductions are a hit. They also surface as product configurators and as a tool for sales reps, allowing them to access CRM data (and edit it) in real time.

Mobile adoption increases employee productivity. Partly, this is simply because mobile tablets allow employees to work seamlessly after they've left the office. The tablets ensure that employees are always connected – and always working – no matter what their location. As a result, productivity improves with each new task that can be accomplished using mobile devices and applications.

But that's only part of the picture. Part of the allure of mobile is more psychological: We tend to treat mobile devices as an extension of ourselves. Mobile is how we communicate, the tool we use to conduct both personal and business tasks, and the means for organizing information. Because we enjoy using mobile, we like to find innovative ways to use our mobile devices and “get the job done.”

In 2012, the question is not whether employees should be using mobile. They already are. It's irreversible. The question is: How can you harness the technology by shifting to mobile thinking, leveraging its capabilities to the fullest in order to create real business value?

Isn't It Just Like the Web?

One of the challenges of mobile adoption is the expense of developing new mobile apps. Manufacturers and wholesalers, looking to cut corners on mobile app development, are frequently tempted to adapt their existing sites for mobile use. This plan, though often cheaper than developing or buying a new app, is likely to provide way-less-than-optimal ROI. The problem is that by using existing websites, you end up with a product that's not up to snuff.

Thanks to the exploding mobile app market, employees have high expectations for mobile tools. They want an attractive user experience that is customized to meet their needs. If you're offering employees a less than ideal solution, you'll probably find that no one wants to use it. Employees are looking for an app that takes advantage of the mobile platform, a solution that is specifically suited to the device.

For example, a salesperson working in the field wants an app that works online and offline; something that takes orders and then synchs when you're back online.

A mobile app that facilitates the workflow successfully can address all of the needs of a sales team. Whereas last-gen solutions had limited success in the field, today's tablets can cover every aspect of a field operative's job: high-quality presentations, communication with the office, easy data entry and access, frictionless handling of forms and approval, email and even signature capture. This is not something that a mobile version of your website can provide. When you're using mobile for business, time is of the essence and you'll need a solution that feels intuitive, works efficiently, and saves time.

But it's not just about the employee's efficiency. Mobile devices are powerful because they also transform the customer's experience: shifting the dialogue with retailers into a more intuitive form of interaction. Retailers can get involved and develop a sense of ownership, at a very early stage of the sales process. Mobile promotes a vastly more sophisticated approach to sales, which is highly interactive. Retailers can touch and manipulate your products, split them into components, rotate the elements and receive an updated price quote. All this leads to speedier sales and greater revenue.

Save Money, Generate Sales

By developing strong mobile strategy and investing in mobile thinking, wholesalers and manufacturers can cut costs and increase sales. Mobile technologies provide the tools for more efficient work habits, lower expenses, maximized face time during sales visits and improved communication between reps and the head office, all of which leads to more professional sales presentations and increased sales.

Initial Changes: Saving You Money

Wholesalers and manufacturers can reduce expenses by adopting some of the many mobile apps, which are designed to simplify the B2B world. For example, apps help field reps check travel arrangements and book hotels. Others help reps find nearby eateries when they're in a new city, while still others allow a team to snap photos of receipts and upload the images to their expense accounts.

While these changes are helpful, they are only small productivity efficiencies, which are not significant enough (by themselves) to justify the investment in infrastructure and changes to business practice required for an optimal mobile solution.

More significant to your sales and marketing budgets, mobile tablets minimize the need to print comprehensive product catalogs. Using mobile devices, you can shrink the expense of shipping catalogs and product samples. Reps may still carry a few samples and perhaps a brief, printed product description, to leave with retailers as a take-away. But the large array of products and books that the rep traditionally maneuvered is vastly reduced.

Bigger Changes: Maximizing Face-Time

The pace of today's business world means that the 15 or 20 minutes formerly allocated to sales visits are often cut to five minutes or less. Reps must be able to present data quickly and accurately about their products, and at the same time, they must establish good working relationships. Leisurely office visits have been replaced by tightly scheduled meetings where business is done quickly with contractual work and approvals, so that sales are closed on the spot.

Mobile technology allows reps to focus on the client during sales visits, and develop the relationships. Customized presentations that meet the specific business needs of specific customers, prevents the rep from wasting time browsing through the entire catalog just looking for the right items. Mobile devices make face-time with clients more productive, interactive and effective, while simultaneously reducing back-end administrative tasks. Time consuming tasks such as sending quotes and filling out paper or spreadsheet-based order forms can be completely avoided, leaving the sales reps to focus on sales activities that increase sales.

Finally: Improved Communication with Head Office

From the corporation's point of view, the on-the-road nature of the sales rep's position creates information flow problems in both directions: in updating a sales rep's marketing materials, pricing guides and promotional schedules; and in logging sales.

In the past, the sales team frequently didn't have complete information when talking to a client. Perhaps the product that the rep was showing was out of stock, or no longer manufactured. Or the price might be out of date. Perhaps certain products were being promoted extensively through media messaging, but the rep didn't know which products were included in the promotion.

Mobile reduces the gap between the field team and the head office. Now, the rep is always fully informed. Mobile devices allow the rep to be in constant contact with information flowing from head-office, receiving real-time updates of pricing and promotions, checking availability and inventory levels and viewing historical orders. In the other direction, orders get sent back to corporate headquarters from the field as soon as they've been taken, without having to wait for the rep to find the time to fill them out after a long & grueling road trip.

With the tablet's always-on capability and CRM plus catalog Apps, reps attend meetings armed with the latest customer & product information. This leads to more professional, high-quality interactions and a faster ability to close sales.

Challenges of Mobile Adoption

While businesses are currently increasing their mobile projects at a startling rate, they're also increasingly troubled by the cost of adoption and the length of time it takes to complete. In approaching the question of mobile adoption, the following challenges must be addressed:

- A mobile solution must work with any of the 200+ platforms that are available
- A significant chunk of the cost of mobile is the middleware and integration.
- Devices must be provided for employees (or the company must develop bring-your-own-device policies)
- Content entered via mobile must be synced with the website
- Mobile technologies need support
- Development of mobile cannot compromise security or performance

For adoption to be successful, mobile technologies must be an extension of the existing infrastructure – not a replacement for it. Most organizations have already made a significant investment in a technology infrastructure, and it is impractical and expensive to completely abandon existing infrastructure and legacy applications. Mobile must be able to integrate into the existing enterprise infrastructure.

Then, there's the question of the app itself. In the business world, professionals have more to accomplish than ever before, with far shorter timetables. Mobile adoption can only be successful if the app that the business uses allows employees to work better, faster and easier. An intuitive app, providing necessary functions without a lot of extraneous options, is more effective than a complex solution that has the devastating potential of slowing employees down.

The process of mobile adoption must also take into consideration the time necessary to train employees in new modes of operation. For example, development is shifted to a different technology platform, requiring new skill sets.

Mobile is a business enabler; avoid the pressure to go for a quick-fix. To succeed, mobile apps must evolve into a mobile-enabled business solution, allowing companies to leverage their existing business structures.

Introducing FieldVision

Imagiu's FieldVision is the perfect solution to the challenge of getting real business value from mobile for B2B companies. Facilitating successful mobile adoption for B2B at a lower cost, FieldVision puts the power of constantly up-to-date product information in the hands of your reps, allowing them to make the most out of every interaction with their accounts.

FieldVision allows you to replace all or some of the old product catalogs, product samples and price and inventory sheets, which are expensive to produce and distribute – driving up the costs associated with your field sales team. You can replace them all with a low cost, professional, great looking and easy to handle iPad app that helps you cut the costs of supporting your team while simultaneously enabling the sales team to increase sales.

FieldVision also helps you keep your field team in sync with the head office. You can communicate a promotion or a product line that needs to be pushed last minute. Head office can also send ready-made, up-to-date presentations for immediate use with customers.

With FieldVision, you upload your products, customer and rep information to a secure cloud server using standard file formats. Once your cloud catalog is ready for action, reps download FieldVision from the AppStore and log in. The app automatically syncs with your cloud catalog, and reps are ready to roll. Orders from the field are sent in standard file formats ready for easy import into your backend system. You can update your information and view analytics through an easy-to-access web portal, and all changes are automatically synced with the iPads.

Imagiu's FieldVision offers bottom line value to B2B companies with field sales teams, delivering the immense value of mobile to your business. Contact us to find out more.