Realizing the Mobility Advantage for Small and Medium Enterprises
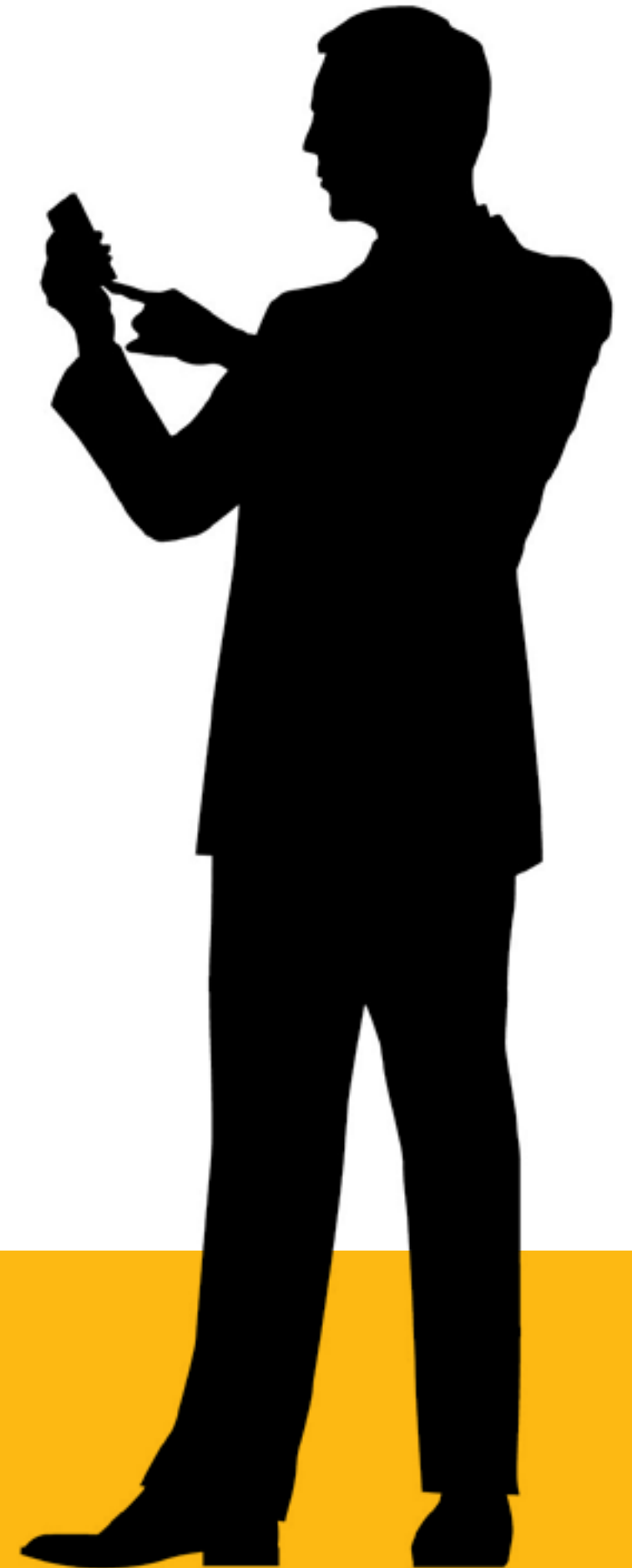
Mobility Strategies that Create Competitive Advantage and Growth Opportunity

Contents

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The Best-Run Businesses Run SAP™

The Essence of Competitive Advantage

Successful businesses are successful because they maintain a competitive advantage. This is especially true for small and medium enterprises that compete more on the merits of their products and services than the dominance of their brand.

What is the essence of their competitive advantage? It may be a unique product or service, or a level of service that sets them apart, or an operational advantage that allows them to offer exceptional value. It may be a combination of factors. However, the essential fact is that customers come back because they find what they are looking for; they get good value; and they like dealing with the business.

In recent years, technology has had a profound effect on the way businesses operate. Technology has made business more global and more mobile. These trends have created new business opportunities, but they have also increased competition, and competition has been a key driver behind the adoption of technologies that give businesses greater reach through more mobile operations.

Small and medium enterprises are often at the leading edge of new technology adoption, and that is certainly the case with today's business mobility. Smartphones and tablets have become essential tools in today's business environment. Yet how exactly does business mobility provide a competitive advantage?
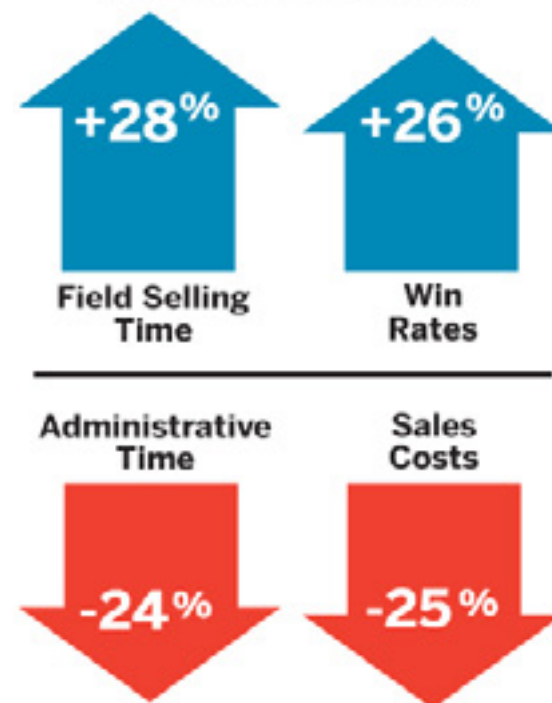
The Essence of Competitive Advantage

Consider the two sales scenarios on this page. These two scenarios illustrate the essential advantages of a mobilized work process. Those advantages are real and measurable as the following analyst research shows:

The question for most small and medium enterprises today is not whether they should adopt a mobility strategy. The question is how to do it in ways that are cost effective and secure while providing the greatest competitive advantage.

To find the answers, we need to take a closer look at how business mobility creates business advantage.

Advantage of Mobile Business Apps:[1]

+28% Field Selling Time

+26% Win Rates

-24% Administrative Time

-25% Sales Costs

Click diagram to play >

TWO SALES SCENARIOS

1 Without Mobile Sales Tools

- Ted's big deal fails to close. He had counted on making the sale, so he is disappointed.

- Ted goes to the office. He logs in to the CRM system and reviews his customer list. He needs to fill his pipeline.

- Ted's sales activity reporting is not fully up-to-date. He reviews email and notes to update lead and prospect status.

- Ted moves the day's big deal to the lost column and sees the hit on his pipeline report.

- Ted gets a call from his manager. He explains the situation but says he's working on setting up meetings for the rest of the week.

- Ted calls his wife to let her know he will be working late.

Sales score at the end of the day: 0

2 With Mobile Sales Tools

- Ted's big deal fails to close. He had counted on making the sale, so he is disappointed.

- Ted uses his GPS-equipped tablet with mobile CRM to move this prospect to the lost column. Then he looks up those prospects closest to his current location.

- Ted sees a cold prospect. He calls his contact who says they're ready to make a decision and how quickly can Ted get there?

- Ted arrives in 10 minutes. He quickly swaps a slide so his tablet-based presentation is customized to this customer.

- The customer needs product availability information. Ted finds it with his inventory app.

- Ted closes the deal, logs the sale into the mobile CRM, and goes home early.

Sales score at the end of the day: 1

Mobilizing Competitive Advantage

INSIDE THE MOBILITY ADVANTAGE

The sales scenarios shown on the previous page compare a traditional sales process with a mobilized one. These simple scenarios tell a story familiar to any business that has mobilized its sales force as well as any business that has lost sales to more agile competitors.

However, these scenarios reveal something more. Advantages enjoyed by the more mobile sales person are the same advantages gained from any mobile business process. Mobility advantage is based on these essential qualities:

- **Anywhere operations**
- **Quick access to relevant business information**
- **More responsive business operations**
- **More efficient operations**

How does mobility inject these qualities into business operations, and how does that affect the way business works?

ANYWHERE OPERATIONS

The most obvious advantage of a mobile operation is that it can happen anywhere. As our mobile sales scenario shows, today's powerful smartphones and tablets give workers access to information, and capture workers' activities, whether they are sitting at their desk, riding in a taxi, or engaging face-to-face with a customer.

Mobilizing Competitive Advantage

QUICK ACCESS TO RELEVANT BUSINESS INFORMATION

In the mobile sales scenario, mobile Ted is able to quickly access product availability information with a mobile app. Mobility provides immediate access to relevant business information needed to make faster, more accurate operational decisions. Reports and dashboards, access to customer and partner records, mobile analytics, and task-specific applications ensure that mobile workers have the right information at the right time, PRESENTED IN A FORMAT THAT IS EASY TO CONSUME.

MORE RESPONSIVE BUSINESS OPERATIONS

In our mobile sales scenario, mobile Ted was able to respond quickly when the customer decided they were ready to make a decision. He had accurate information at his fingertips that enabled him to quickly answer the customer's questions. Customers go with the best solution available to them at the time they require it. That means successful competitors win business by responding quickly. However mobility is a business process accelerator whose benefits extend beyond sales scenarios. Any business process that depends on tactical information, whether it is a sales process, an operational decision, a workflow process, or a planning process, benefits from the immediate availability of relevant information.

MORE EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

In the sales scenario, mobile Ted was able to make more contacts and close more sales in less time. Mobile Ted's reporting process was more streamlined and immediate. In fact, mobile Ted's entire sales operation was more efficient. The same capabilities that make Mobile Ted a more efficient and productive salesman extend to other mobilized workers and business processes. Mobility promotes more efficient operations by being always on, always connected, and always in-hand with the right information and the right function set.

These four qualities—anywhere operations, instant access to relevant information, more responsive operations, and more efficient operations—represent the essential advantages mobile operations have over non-mobile business scenarios. They also explain why the un-mobilized Ted in our sales scenario never had a chance.

However, these benefits explain only part of the mobility advantage. The same advantages that benefit mobile workers inside the enterprise can extend to engagements with vendors, suppliers, and customers too through mobile applications designed specifically for them. In fact, the most powerful mobility advantage of all comes when interdependent business operations become mobilized in a way that allows them to share real-time data. What exactly does that mean?
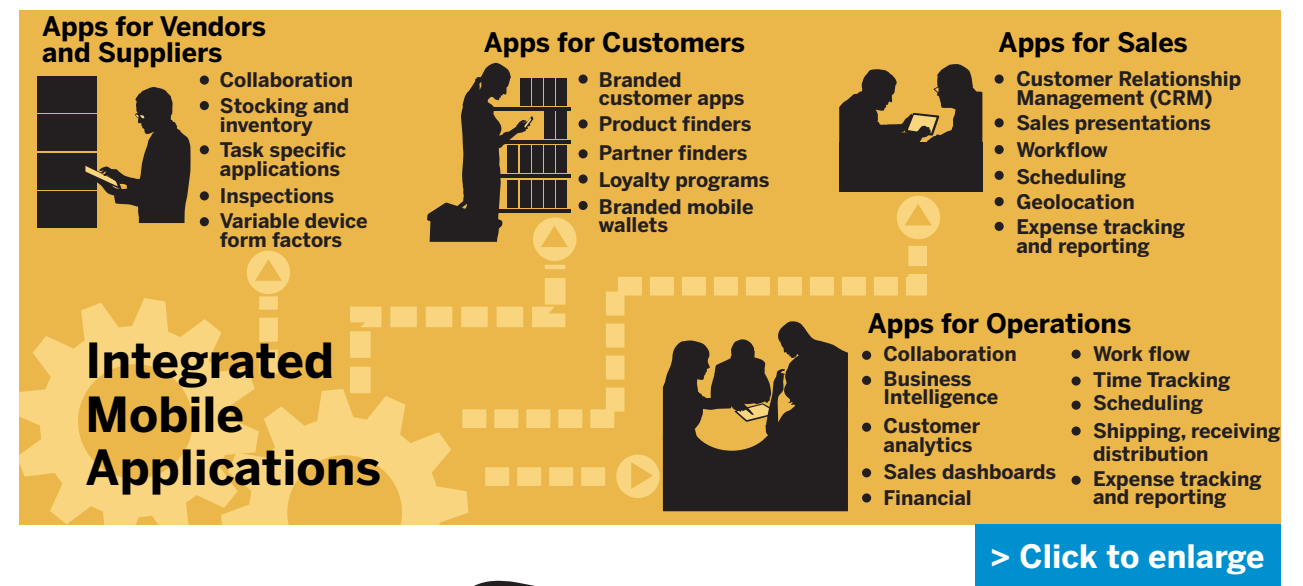
Strategic Application of Business Mobility

Companies often start with mobility by adopting an application that serves a specialized function. It might be a sales support tool, or a task-specific app, or a manager's dashboard. This makes sense because the apps are small and low cost, and they serve an easily identified need.

Yet it is true that nearly every business process depends on another process. For example, in the mobilized sales scenario cited earlier, Mobile Ted checked an inventory application to answer the customer's question about product availability. Data in the inventory app depends on other processes, such as deliveries from suppliers. If the company's suppliers use a mobile application that records deliveries in real-time as they come off the truck, and if that information goes into a shared database, then Ted can be confident his inventory app is giving him an accurate,

real-time picture of product availability. That helps Ted close the sale. It also improves the downstream order fulfillment process.

As mobility is adopted more widely in day-to-day business operations, the company as a whole benefits from the availability of real-time business information. This enables the business to operate smarter and more efficiently, and respond more quickly to market realities.

Apps for Vendors and Suppliers
- Collaboration
- Stocking and inventory
- Task specific applications
- Inspections
- Variable device form factors

Apps for Customers
- Branded customer apps
- Product finders
- Partner finders
- Loyalty programs
- Branded mobile wallets

Apps for Sales
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Sales presentations
- Workflow
- Scheduling
- Geolocation
- Expense tracking and reporting

Integrated Mobile Applications

Apps for Operations
- Collaboration
- Business Intelligence
- Customer analytics
- Sales dashboards
- Financial
- Work flow
- Time Tracking
- Scheduling
- Shipping, receiving distribution
- Expense tracking and reporting

> Click to enlarge

Five Strategies for Adopting High Value Business Mobility

Many companies using mobile business applications have discovered that along with the benefits come unique challenges.

For instance, a mobile device is more likely to be lost or stolen than a desktop computer, which introduces a new security risk, especially if the device is running apps that contain sensitive information. Managing security is further complicated by the growing trend of allowing employees to use their own mobile devices for work.

Security is not the only consideration. There are five specific areas of strategic importance that directly relate to the overall value of any mobility implementation. These are:

- **Controlling Cost**
- **Managing Security**
- **Device and Application Management**
- **Application Integration**
- **Scalability**

Taking the right approach to business mobility effectively addresses all these considerations. Let's see how.

Five Strategies for Adopting High Value Business Mobility

1. CONTROLLING COST

A top concern for small to medium enterprises is controlling mobility cost.

When considering mobility costs, many companies think of the direct costs of smartphones and tablets, data plans, and the shockingly high bills that users sometimes incur. Rich mobile business apps enable workers to consume larger amounts of information in their day-to day activities. When mobile devices are used to share documents, manage workflow, engage in real-time collaboration, view images, rely on always-current data, and interact with live data, they consume bandwidth. When workers use their business applications while traveling, they can incur enormous charges, especially if they are traveling internationally.

There are several strategies companies can adopt to control costs. These include:

- **Adopt "bring your own device" (BYOD) policies:** Companies that encourage employees to use their own devices at work shift some mobility cost to workers who are already spending money on mobile devices for personal use. Many companies offer employees a fixed monthly allowance when they bring their own devices to work. BYOD strategies enable companies to avoid up-front device costs and limit their monthly billing expense.

- **Usage alerts:** Look for service providers who send text message usage alerts when users are about to exceed their data plan limits, or when users roam to a different network that may incur higher usage rates.

- **Alerts and triggers built into mobile applications:** Data intensive mobile applications can be built to automatically give users the option of seeking a Wi-Fi network connection before engaging in a data intensive action such as downloading documents or images.

These strategies significantly reduce device and usage costs. Controlling direct costs is important, but there are other mobility costs to consider. For instance, an effective mobility strategy also lowers the costs of managing and configuring mobile applications. The task of managing applications becomes critical as more apps running on a greater variety of mobile devices are used to drive key business operations.

Another way to lower cost is to improve security. Security breaches can be very costly indeed.

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Five Strategies for Adopting
High Value Business Mobility

2. MANAGING SECURITY

Many companies limit their use of mobility simply because they are afraid of the security risks. When they do this, they limit their competitive potential.

Many companies limit their use of mobility simply because they are afraid of the security risks. When they do this, they limit their competitive potential.

With the right kind of mobility strategy, mobile operations can be every bit as secure as office-based operations. Making mobile operations secure depends on addressing two parts of the security challenge:

- **Security policy:** Every company needs a security policy that addresses mobility practices such as appropriate device usage, data handling on the device, reporting lost or stolen devices, and issuing a statement that makes clear the company's right to remove company data and applications from any mobile devices used in the workplace. The security policy should be an extension of existing security policies and practices already in place. The policy should be known to employees, and abiding by the policy should be a condition of employment.

- **A mobile device management solution with common tools for enforcing security policy:** Policies are great, but without the technology to enforce them, they are of limited value. Whether a company deploys a device management solution or standardizes one through a service provider, the platform needs to support all devices used in the workplace. It also needs to provide controls for managing device level functions such as user authentication, data encryption, remote device lock, remote data wipe, and usage tracking.

It is important to work with a mobile device management solution that provides one set of tools for managing and securing all devices and applications. This greatly simplifies security enforcement as mobility becomes a more important part of business operations. It also simplifies overall device and application management.

Five Strategies for Adopting
High Value Business Mobility

3. DEVICE AND APPLICATION MANAGEMENT

Effectively managing devices and applications not only controls mobility costs, it enables more efficient mobile operations.

Device and application management may seem like a daunting task as the company adopts more applications, and those apps require support on a greater variety of mobile devices. Once again a device management solution is key to effective device and application management.

A mobile device management solution should have these capabilities:

- **Supports all device types:** This means one set of controls to manage all devices, rather than different controls for different devices. It also means a business application can be built once, and it will run on a variety of devices. Support for device-agnostic applications lowers the cost of developing and maintaining business applications.

- **"App Store" application distribution model:** Enables companies to establish an "app store" where employees can download and install business apps. This lowers support costs.

- **Group policy application distribution:** Enables distribution of pre-configured applications based on group policies related to job roles, device types, or both. Preconfigured apps get users up to speed quickly and lower support costs.

- **Over the air provisioning:** Push apps or application updates out to users. This keeps all users up to date with no effort on their part.

Managing devices and applications, security, and costs are essential for getting the most value out of a mobility strategy. But there are other ways to manage mobility for greater competitive advantage and growth.

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Five Strategies for Adopting High Value Business Mobility

4. APPLICATION INTEGRATION

Earlier we showed how integrated mobile applications enable a company to mobilize different aspects of the operation so that advantages of mobility spread across the entire business. This happens when applications share data. For example, a business might provide a mobile app to its distributors who collect data that ultimately populates a mobile app supporting the sales reps.

Data sharing between mobile apps and back-end databases enables a company to be more knowledgeable and responsive in all its operations. This makes the company a stronger competitor.

How do mobile apps share data? When all apps are based on one mobile application platform standard, they all share common links to back-end data sources such as a company database.

Platform-based mobility not only enables a company to optimize its mobility advantage, it is the key to one more essential mobility strategy: scalability.

5. SCALABILITY

If a mobility strategy is not scalable, it can become a growth inhibitor.

With a platform-based strategy that provides common controls for security, device and application management, and application integration, companies can easily modify and expand their mobility strategy to meet changing business requirements.

The advantages of a platform approach to mobility are clear enough, but what is the best way to adopt a platform strategy?
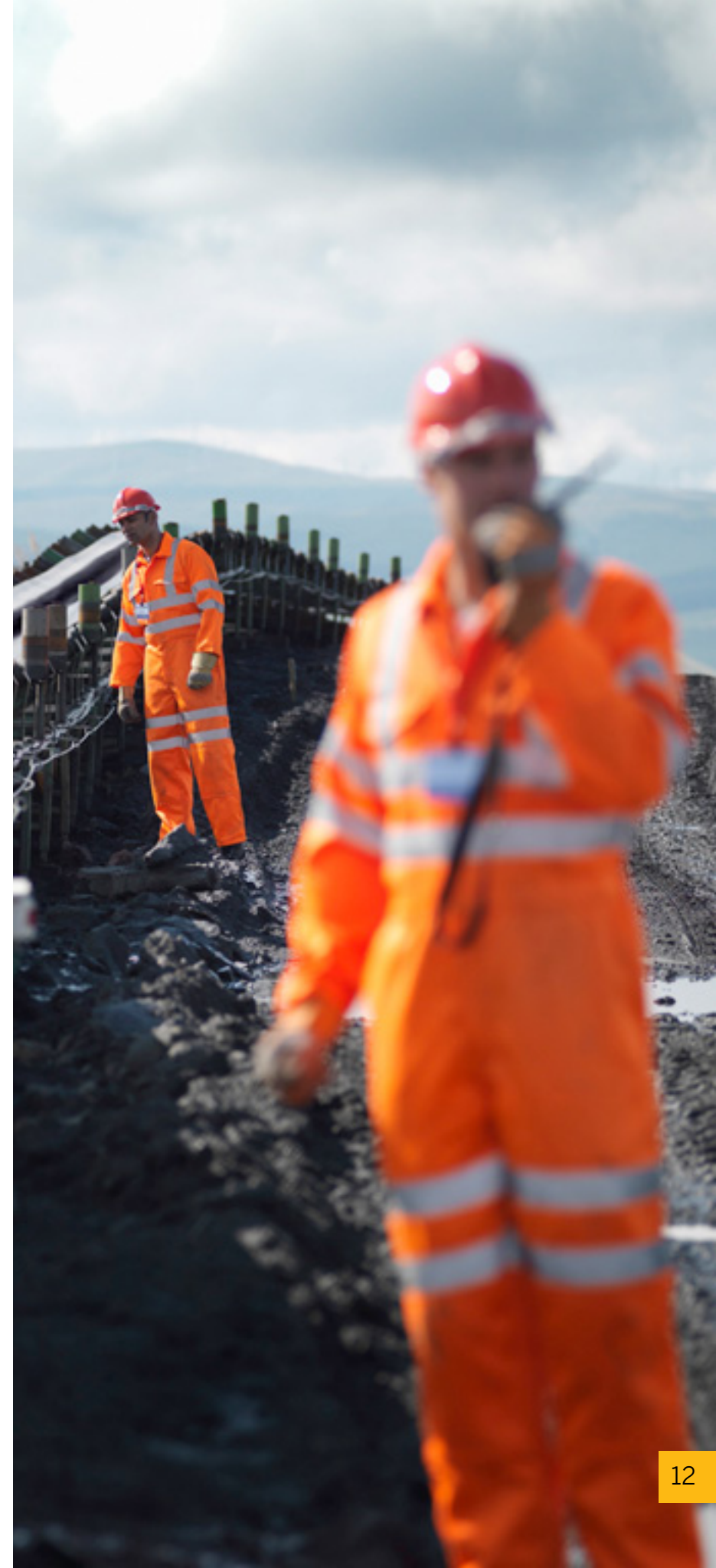
Preparing for a Mobility Driven Future

PITFALLS OF A GRAB-BAG APPROACH TO MOBILITY

Business mobility has a way of creeping up.

Companies often begin with mobile email. They might adopt a specialty app to support some aspect of their business, a sales support tool, or a task-specific application. Some employees may figure out how to use a social networking site to share documents. Maybe an employee downloads a low cost time tracker app for their Android phone, and another worker who thinks that's cool downloads a different one, with a different data format, for their iPhone.

Before long, a lot of people in the company are using mobility in a lot of different ways. But little thought has been given to leveraging those mobile apps in ways that benefit the business more broadly. For instance, those time tracker apps make their users more efficient and accurate in tracking their time. But how much more valuable would it be if the apps tied in directly to a corporate billing application?

The ad-hoc approach to mobility can actually hamper business operations by creating mobile processes that are cut off from the rest of the organization.

Preparing for a Mobility Driven Future

VALUE OF A PLATFORM STRATEGY

What exactly is a mobility platform?

A mobility platform is a technology environment for developing integrated mobile apps, managing devices and apps, and managing security. Adopting a mobility platform provides a uniform set of tools for managing all mobile applications and devices used by an organization. A platform-based mobility strategy provides very specific operational advantages that include:

Lower total cost of mobile operations resulting from a mobility infrastructure that simplifies application development, deployment, and on-going support across an environment where there are a number of different mobile device types and operating systems;

Stronger protection for enterprise data and information on mobile devices comes from a uniform set of security management features that works for all devices and applications;

Lower application development costs are made possible by an application development platform that enables building a mobile application once so that it will run on all mobile devices supported by the company;

Greater operational efficiencies become possible through mobile applications that share data and integrate with other corporate data systems. A mobile application development platform provides hooks to any back-end data source. All mobile applications built on the platform are data compatible;

More scalable mobile business operations become possible in a simplified application development environment and with a mobile device management solution that supports all device types and operating systems;

Greater operational flexibility and faster response to changing business needs is made possible by a robust and flexible mobile platform that accelerates the development and deployment of cross-platform mobile apps and supports new generations of mobile devices.

All these advantages work to enhance a company's competitive edge and growth opportunity. Yet committing to a mobility platform is a big decision. What is the best way to take advantage of a platform-based mobility strategy?

Scalability
Number of Applications and Users

Platform Strategy

Grab-Bag Strategy

Level of Mobility Integration
Operational Advantage

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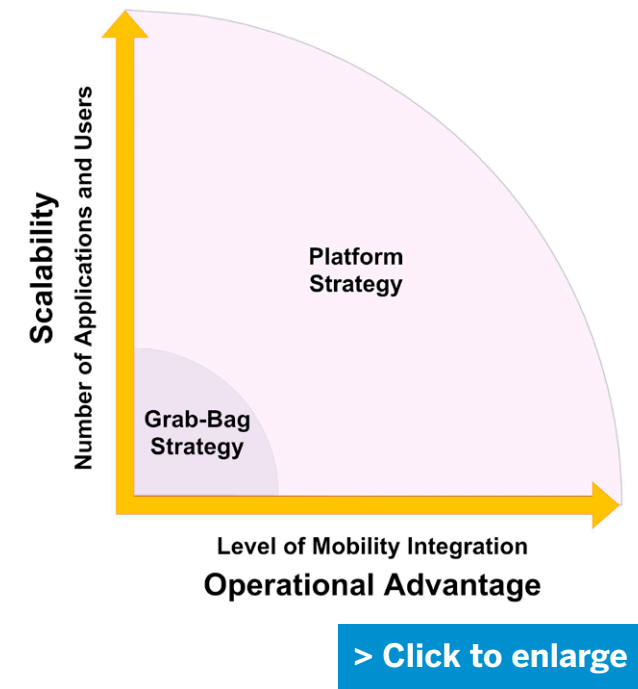
Preparing for a Mobility Driven Future

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO A PLATFORM STRATEGY

There are several ways companies can pursue a platform strategy. All of them provide the advantages of platform-based mobility. Alternative approaches to a platform strategy include:

- An organization can purchase and implement a platform outright. Many companies may not be ready to make this level of mobility investment.

- An organization that wants to standardize on a platform but is not ready to make the investment can work with a vendor who provides a mobility platform as a hosted service.

FOOTNOTES

1. Parr, Clint. "How To Use Mobile Business Apps To Increase Sales." CRN, July 21, 2011.

Contact us

Thank you for your interest in Mobility Solutions from SAP. Please contact your local SAP representative or SAP Channel Partner for more information.

Learn more:

Below are more resources to assist you in your research. What are you looking for?

Companion Article 1
[Five Strategies Small and Medium Enterprises Can Use to Successfully Implement High Value Business Mobility](#)

Companion Article 2
[The Value of Integrated Business Mobility for Small and Medium Enterprises](#)

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- Time Tracking
- Scheduling
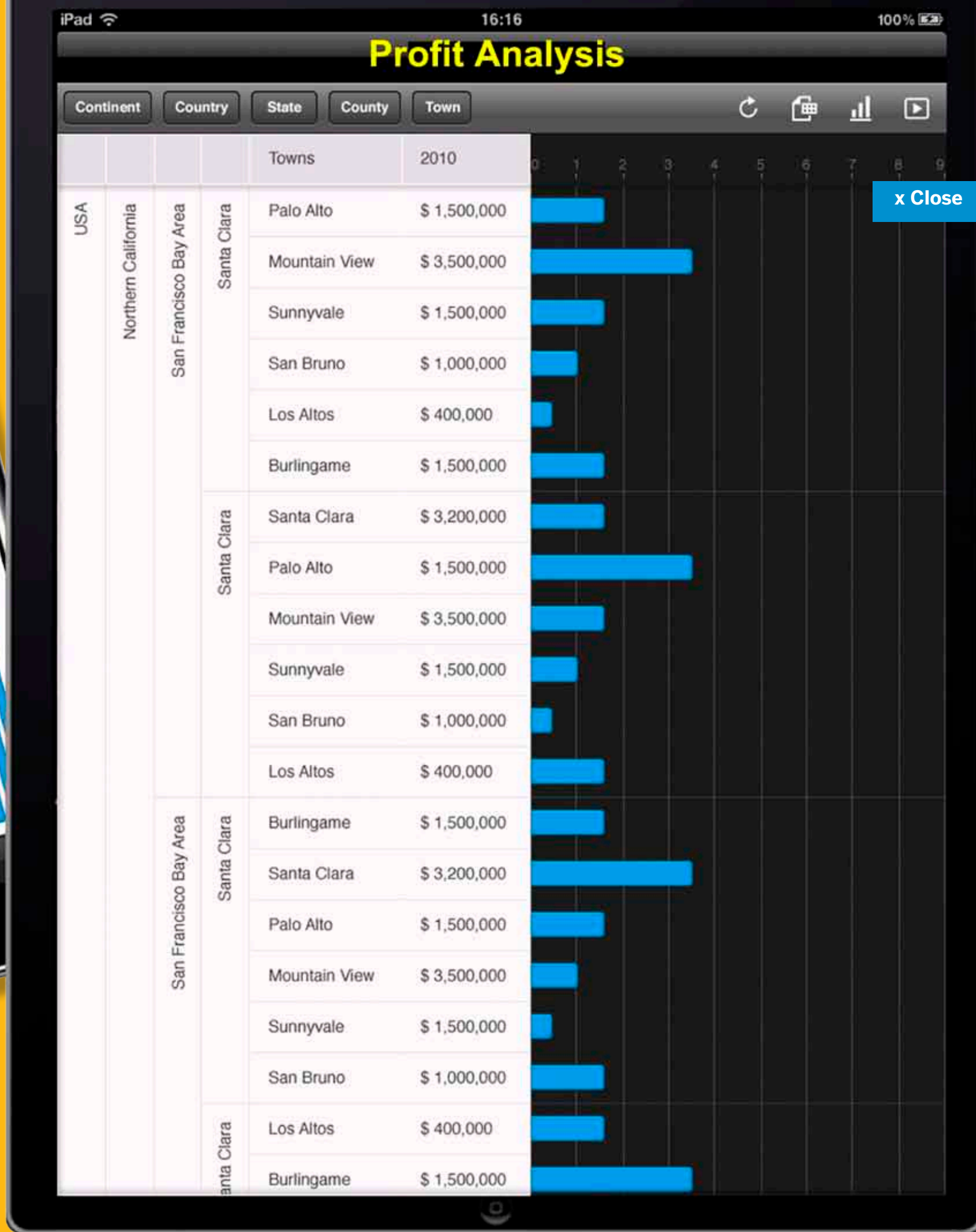- Shipping, receiving, distribution
- Expense tracking and reporting

Yet it is true that nearly every business process depends on another process. For example, in the mobilized sales scenario cited earlier, Mobile Ted checked an inventory application to answer the customer's question about product availability. Data in the inventory app depends on other processes, such as deliveries from suppliers. If the company's suppliers use a mobile application that records deliveries in real-time as they come off the truck, and

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Preparing for a Mobility Driven Future

VALUE OF A PLATFORM STRATEGY

What exactly is a mobility platform?

A mobility platform is a technology environment for developing integrated mobile apps, managing devices and apps, and managing security. Adopting a mobility platform provides a uniform set of tools for managing all mobile applications and devices used by an organization. A platform-based mobility strategy provides very specific operational advantages that include:

Lower total cost of mobile operations resulting from a mobility infrastructure that simplifies application development, deployment, and on-going support across an environment where there are a number of different mobile device types and operating systems;

Stronger pr[...] for enterpris[...] information [...] comes from [...] security ma[...] that works f[...] applications;

Lower applic[...] developmen[...] possible by a[...] development [...] enables build[...] application c[...] will run on al[...] supported by[...]

Greater ope[...] efficiencies [...] through mob[...] that share da[...] with other c[...] systems. A [...] development [...] hooks to any[...] source. All mobile applications built on the platform are data compatible;

decision. What is the best way to take advantage of a platform-based mobility strategy?

x Close

Scalability
Number of Applications and Users

Platform Strategy

Grab-Bag Strategy

Level of Mobility Integration
Operational Advantage

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