BUILD A KILLER
MOBILE STRATEGY
NOW

The looming reality of an always on - always connected world is turning the actual world on its edge.

Virtually, of course. The actual world being round. But here's the thing. Mobile computing is long past the gee whiz I can get my emails and sign into HR from my smartphone phase. Mobile is on the come-up, and fast. In fact, recognized thought leaders in technology and business are calling mobile computing via cloud the most disruptive technology trend of the decade. And there's every indication they're right.

Starting now, from 2014 through 2020, 90% of IT growth will be driven by what IDC has dubbed 3rd Platform Technologies. What's this 3rd Platform about? Essentially, it's the tech industry's emerging framework for massive growth and unparalleled innovation. Called 3rd Platform because it succeeds the previous two IT growth engines; Mainframe and Terminals in the 1980's and more recently, LAN/Internet and Client/Server in the 2000's. The 3rd Platform, more colossal than its forerunners in every conceivable way, is a promising amalgam of mobile computing, cloud services, big data analytics and social networking. Gartner refers to it as a "nexus of forces" that "is transforming the way people and businesses relate to technology." Mobile and cloud, without argument, are bedrock when it comes to the 3rd platform.

The rise of mobile computing is being forced by certain fundamental occurrences, paramount among them; the consumerization of IT, explosive mobile app growth and accelerated cloud adoption. What's more, smartphones and tablets (already outselling PCs) are expected to surge higher in the next few years. So whether you're building and testing apps for specific communities or grappling with the deep complexities of BYOD, it's a sure bet that mobile is playing a role in your enterprise. The question now is, are you making smart plays? The kind of moves that set you up for long term progressive success and give you a leg up on the competition. If your answer is, I'm not sure. Stop! Right now. It's time to gain clarity.

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First, why are you shuffling down the mobile brick road?

You already know this, but it warrants repeating. So your organization can reap the ample rewards of:

1. Better, faster decision making

2. Enhanced customer relationships and expanded retention

3. Increased revenue generating possibilities

4. Significant time and money savings

5. Reimagining current processes and workflows to increase efficiency and profitability

Enough said. The promise of mobile is huge. We get it.

But since the road is largely untraveled, the paved portion is, well, spotty. It's rife with sinkholes, makeshift bridges and moats overflowing with sticky green goo. Hyperbole aside, here are the challenges you'll need to conquer as you head down this worthy yet unfamiliar path.

1. **The number of vendors in the space**
   Who do you choose and why?

2. **The range of technology solutions**
   Which approach is best for your particular situation?

3. **How to deploy**
   How much responsibility does IT take on and why?

4. **Cost**
   If you intend to make money, you will have to spend money.

5. **Company culture**
   Culture is everything. CULTURE is everything.

6. **Existing IT Infrastructure**
   How best do you capitalize on what you already have without going too far?

"Enough said. The promise of mobile is huge. We get it. But since the road is largely untraveled, the paved portion is, well, spotty."

7 IT Resources
What are the skills, experiences and interests of your IT teams that apply?

Considering the heap of challenges, you're going to need a game plan. A good one.

Begin by thinking strategically. What you invest in and adopt today will have to lead somewhere. Your decisions must set your enterprise up for successful progression down the mobile trail. You won't have time to rip and replace if you get it wrong. Your competitors will be out ahead of you and you'll be playing catch up in the slow lane. You know the one. It's all the way to the right, but close enough to let you grab a quick glimpse of other contenders whizzing past.

Thinking strategically means exactly what you expect. And before you squint and scrunch up your face in distaste for the idea of crafting yet another strategy around yet another initiative, know that having a well-conceived comprehensive strategy for mobile in your enterprise is absolutely crucial. Take a moment to refer back to the challenges outlined above; the market overrun with vendors (some good, some not), too many solutions (some applicable, some not), numerous deployment paths and so on. Tackling these hazards intelligently will only happen if you have a really good playbook, otherwise called strategy.

Here are a few things to consider in advance of shaping a strategy.

a Dismiss the idea that you're launching a mobile project.
Mobile is too far-reaching in impact and complexity to be labeled as such. Think about how to incorporate all aspects of the mobile effort into a practice. Because that's what it is. Once the endeavor is underway, it won't end anytime soon. Incorporate business needs, mobile development platforms, apps, management and security of devices and apps, as well as analytics and roadmaps into a fully realized practice area.

"Your decisions must set your enterprise up for successful progression down the mobile trail. "

b. Build a cross-organizational team of invested LOB and IT stakeholders.

Consider such functions as Marketing, Sales, Product Development, Operations and Finance. Likewise, include a good mix of IT as well; like application development, data management, privacy and security and infrastructure. This will be the guiding group that manages the effectiveness of the practice.

c. In conjunction with the above efforts, construct an all-inclusive Mobile Profile of the enterprise.

The following (and certainly other) elements should be included. Ideally, the profile should reflect the organization today and have a section that forecasts future probabilities.

- All roles/workers who access corporate data on smartphones, tablets, or laptops

- All Corporate Liable (CL) data that's being accessed

- All apps, app types, and content

- All access paths, what networks, what network types

- All situations where data is accessed, home offices, airports, etc.

- All devices being used to access CL data

When it comes to crafting a successful mobile strategy, there's a clear pattern emerging. And don't get it twisted, the process is intricate and extremely complicated. So to summarize the effort and approach, let's boil it down to basic concepts. In its simplest form, mobile strategy consists of three components:
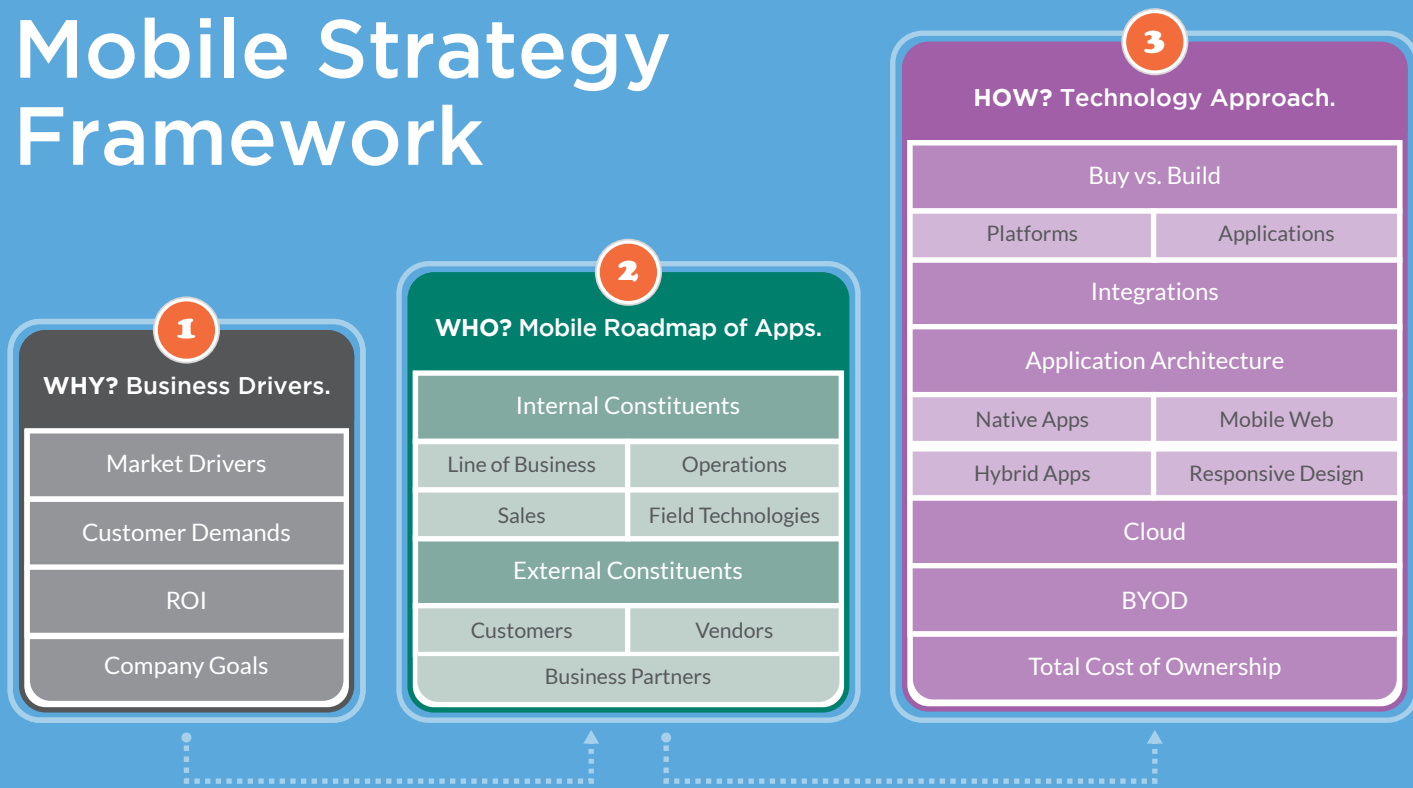
1 The business drivers that shape mobile strategy (Why?)

2 The mobile roadmap of apps (Who?)

3 The technology approach for building mobile apps (How?)

The following framework explains the elements of a mobile strategy and how they relate to one another.

Mobile Strategy Framework

1

WHY? Business Drivers.

Market Drivers
Customer Demands
ROI
Company Goals

2

WHO? Mobile Roadmap of Apps.

Internal Constituents	
Line of Business	Operations
Sales	Field Technologies
External Constituents	
Customers	Vendors
Business Partners	

3

HOW? Technology Approach.

Buy vs. Build	
Platforms	Applications
Integrations	
Application Architecture	
Native Apps	Mobile Web
Hybrid Apps	Responsive Design
Cloud	
BYOD	
Total Cost of Ownership	

Begin by talking to stakeholders across the entire organization. Be proactive and dig deep, work to understand their aggregate requirements. Not surprisingly, the business side will provide the greatest input around what apps to build, while the CTO or CIO's purview will bring insights on how to build and deliver those apps. The prioritization of apps should be driven by the cross-organizational team guiding the practice. Keep in mind that as the framework flows from Why to Who to How, you will experience some overlap. For example, the recognition of the need for ROI is included in the first phase. But you can only create a detailed ROI analysis after you've determined who will use the app and the specific technology approach being considered. Makes sense, yes?

Now, here's a quick overview of the process:

1 Be intensely business driven (Why?)

Understand the challenges and opportunities that your enterprise is dealing with. And don't neglect to analyze the external environment. Being astute regarding the market drivers is crucial to building an effective roadmap. Focus here on identifying strategic app initiatives. For example, if your company is maniacally focused on growth, target apps poised to fuel revenue expansion, like sales automation or customer facing apps. Likewise, if internal process improvement is the push, place the emphasis on operations, finance or your intranet. And avoid one-off projects. No matter what you imagine the ROI could be or how tempting the adoption trajectory. This increases the risk of your mobile portfolio being misaligned with your company's core objectives. Remember, phase one demands that you answer a deceptively simple question, why are we doing this?

2 Define the Mobile apps Roadmap (Who?)

Now that your direction is solidly pointed towards key company ambitions, get busy crafting your apps roadmap. Essentially, the mobile apps roadmap is all about who (internal and external) you'll be providing solutions to. If you decided in phase 1 that internal processes need tightening, here's where you figure out who (which LOB) can gain maximum value. Maybe your field technicians still use those clunky old 'bricks' to communicate. Or the folks in the warehouse can only access data using a handful of terminals placed in faraway sections. Determine the specific apps, and sets of apps, that will be instrumental in driving the initiatives unearthed in step one. You should already have some insight because you spoke with stakeholders across the organization prior to lining up your strategy. You did that, right? Now you need to narrow down the options, and promptly begin to prioritize them. Here's where things start to look more familiar. Because at this point, there are numerous tools to help you prioritize. One option is to treat the mobile portfolio as any other with a classic matrix represented by benefit
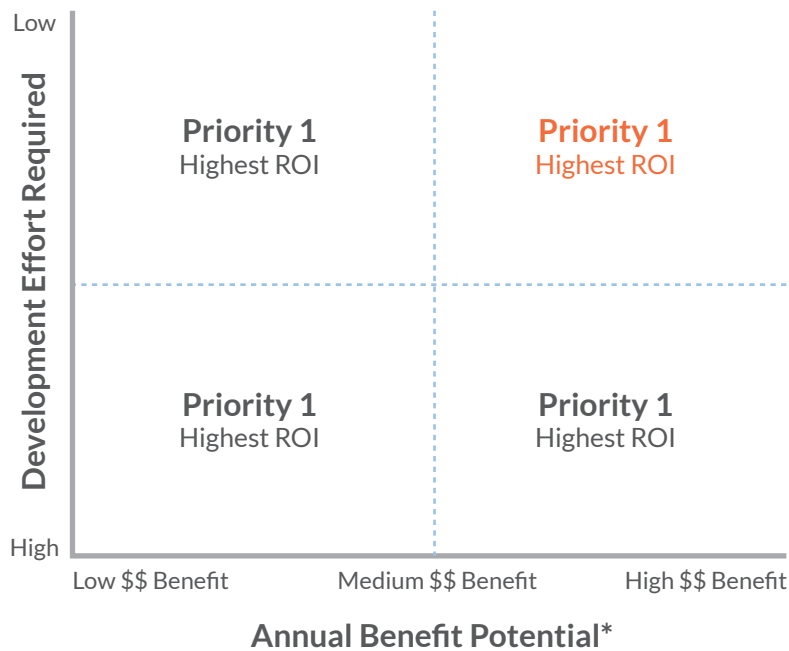
"Understand the challenges and opportunities that your enterprise is dealing with. And don't neglect to analyze the external environment."

"Essentially, the mobile apps roadmap is all about who (internal and external) you'll be providing solutions to."

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potential of each app, and estimated development effort required. But, spoiler alert, you don't want to get too comfortable.

| | Low $$ Benefit | Medium $$ Benefit | High $$ Benefit |

Priority 1
Highest ROI

Priority 1
Highest ROI

Priority 1
Highest ROI

Priority 1
Highest ROI

Low / High — Development Effort Required

Low $$ Benefit   Medium $$ Benefit   High $$ Benefit

Annual Benefit Potential*
Sample spectrum, may scale down or up based on portfolio.

Let's start with the vertical axis. Below is a good beginning list for what impacts development. To be sure, these considerations are closely tied to who will use the app. As for broader development concerns, they will be addressed in the How phase where you'll craft your detailed technology approach.

- **Ease of gathering requirements**
  Who will you need to get specific insights and considerations from?

- **UI/UX approach and capabilities**
  What type of familiarity or preferences might your targeted group(s) have?

- **Number of devices being supported**
  What devices do these folks use today and how many? And what would they like to use?

"One option is to treat the mobile portfolio as any other with a classic matrix represented by benefit potential of each app, and estimated development effort required.

- **Migration requirements for legacy systems**
  How deeply entrenched are they in the use of legacy systems?

- **Data mapping and integration needs**
  What are their particular data requirements and what data will the app map to?

- **Number of biz processes touched**
  What access to various business processes will these particular users need?

- **Offline capabilities of apps**
  What level of sophistication for offline processing is required?

- **Scalability requirements**
  What are the growth expectations for the users, devices, data, etc.?

With regard to the horizontal axis, the annual benefit potential, a standard ROI model should do. For example, if the apps are for internal employees, look at man hours average rate saved. In the case of mCommerce (the buying and selling of goods and services via mobile devices), you'll want to consider increased revenue from mobile channels; for sales automation, increased revenue per employee and so on. It's important to note that projected ROI is used in this phase almost solely to help with prioritizing apps and users. Certainly, all-up ROI will be influenced by the results of the How analysis.

3. Select the best technology approach (How?)
Here's where the territory gets wholly unfamiliar. It's that jagged stretch of road you'll want to reserve exclusively for daylight travel, and the most difficult part of the strategy. To be clear, developing for a mobile-first world is very different

"Projected ROI is used in this phase almost solely to help with prioritizing apps and users.

than developing for web or desktop. Mobile apps need to flex, scale and deliver engaging user experiences. The three-tier architecture used for PC applications just doesn't fit the bill.

With regard to mobile apps architectures, there are essentially four choices: Responsive Website, Mobile Web Application, Native Application, and Hybrid Application. In short, Responsive Website and Mobile Web App are the most cost-effective and the easiest to maintain. While Native Apps are the highest performing in terms of speed and customized experience. Though many factors must be considered, Hybrid applications are a popular choice. Primarily because they combine the cross-platform capabilities of HTML5 with offline, and they can offer some of the device-specific experiences of Native Apps.

And since mobile use cases are wildly diverse, the opportunity for one-size fits all is non-existent. On the other hand, investing in numerous point solutions is a shoddy approach. With all the maintaining of multiple code bases and required learning of new skills, among other issues; the unintended result will send development costs through the roof over the apps' lifecycle.

In this phase, you'll also want to consider how best to leverage your existing investments, infrastructure and talents. Though new skills are a must, if you have good web developers, consider hybrid apps or responsive web apps. If a certain cloud backend is already in place, think about mobile apps that offer similar, but pared down, workflows. This can help spur adoption and propel learning.

Plus you'll need to contemplate how to curtail implementation challenges. Engaging a managed mobility partner instead of embarking on a complete internal build can be a wise choice. But you'll want to ensure that the provider aligns with your organization's internal environment.

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An important way for you to determine a sensible technology approach is to compare the estimated Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) of your app(s) for each development option under consideration. To do this, factor in the investment for the software, implementation and delivery, as well as ongoing maintenance costs. But TCO alone shouldn't drive the decision for technology selection, particularly when it comes to purchasing tools and platforms. Security capabilities, support and SLAs, and the vision displayed by the vendor are key considerations as well.

Now let's circle back to the question, are you making smart moves?

Think about it this way, wherever you are and whatever you've done so far is valuable. Because you're learning. Aren't you? The thing now is to learn smart, not hard. So press pause and look at the effort to date. Determine which characteristics of the work are supporting real progress, and which should be promptly pitched to the side of the road. No cross-organizational team leading the practice? Create one. No mobile profile of your enterprise? Craft one. No, uh, strategy? Construct one.

And in light of the crude, uncivilized terrain, don't be afraid to reach out for guidance from trusted experts.

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