



Making the Business Case for a Wireless Solution

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Introduction

Many companies are investing in wireless and mobile solutions. Millions of users and many thousands of companies access corporate email and calendar information wirelessly today. Where mobility was once viewed as a risky venture, its value is now understood. These solutions are expected to increase productivity and improve efficiency due to improved field-based access to knowledge within the mobile workforce. Most industry analysts believe that companies should already be investing in wireless, or at least planning an implementation and testing potential solutions. In the current competitive climate where companies must compete globally, wireless solutions are no longer about gaining an edge, but about keeping up with the competition.

Typically, a company starts by mobilizing pervasive applications, such as email and calendar, to its most critical users. These applications tend to be the easiest to mobilize and have the broadest appeal. Often, the next step is to mobilize specific applications that solve business problems or deliver business benefits to certain groups within the organization, such as a field service application.

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for understanding how to build a business case for an enterprise wireless solution that goes beyond email. This document

- explains wireless concepts
- describes the different wireless technologies that are available
- recommends potential strategies for successful wireless deployments
- explores the potential benefits and costs that are associated with these wireless solution strategies

Mobility and wireless

Although people tend to use the terms “wireless” and “mobility” interchangeably, the terms can have different meanings and implications for how business is conducted. Although each term is used as a way to solve business problems, it is important to understand how they differ.

The concept of mobility highlights a way of doing business. It is a strategic approach to solving business problems in new and different ways. Wireless is a type of technology that has the capability to solve different types of business problems. Companies should consider investing in wireless solutions only when well-defined business challenges have been identified and prioritized.

Wireless technologies

There are several different types of wireless technologies. Personal area networks (PANs) enable users to connect everyday devices wirelessly, such as digital cameras to printers, or handheld devices to earpieces. Wireless local area networks (WLANs) act as cable replacements for local area networks and are often referred to as Wi-Fi or 802.11. The third and most common type of wireless technology is the wireless wide area network (WWAN), which enables access through a wireless link that is regional, national, or global. These networks are not restricted to a specific physical location, such as a campus, as is the case with Wi-Fi.

Implementation of a wireless solution

There are at least four potential strategies for wireless application implementation.

Strategy	Description
Identify the problems or opportunities that a wireless application could address.	<p>Often, the first step to creating a potentially effective and user-friendly wireless application is to analyze the needs of the mobile user. Consider the following suggested questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What data do mobile workers need while they are away from their desk? • What desktop applications do mobile users depend on for success? • How could a wireless solution change the way the organization's mobile users conduct business?
Understand the key business metrics to evaluate the success of the wireless solution.	Key components of the analysis should include return on investment (ROI) and total cost of ownership (TCO) measures. See "Business metrics" below for more about ROI and TCO measurements.
Capitalize on the concepts of "mobility" and "wireless".	For a wireless solution to be useful, it must be connected to a wireless network and have access to the data that users need. The primary strength of a wireless application is its ability to ideally offer a stable connection for users, regardless of location. Theoretically, this enables users to access any information they need wherever they are in the world. Additional features, such as the push capabilities of a BlackBerry® wireless solution, which allows data to be sent proactively to BlackBerry device users, can further enhance the value of a wireless application.
Incorporate a wireless solution without compromising IT policies and procedures.	<p>A wireless solution should enable system administrators to quickly detect, diagnose, and fix issues, helping to reduce the number of user complaints and support requests.</p> <p>The BlackBerry Enterprise Solution™ is designed to offer system administrators simplified management and centralized control of the wireless environment with industry-standard performance monitoring capabilities and administrative tools. For example, the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution supports 132 security parameters.</p>

Business metrics

Before investing in wireless technologies, you should determine whether a wireless solution is an investment worth making. For example, consider a business executive at a manufacturing firm who has access to critical business analytics at her desktop computer. The organization has invested in a business intelligence system that assists her with decisions. However, the executive does not spend much time at her desk; instead, she attends meetings, visits customers, and oversees plant operations.

Is the company realizing value from the business intelligence system? By extending the system to a wireless device, the company can better capitalize on that investment. It can provide the executive with wireless access to the information she needs. For example, if inventory levels drop while the executive is away from her desk, she can still receive notification and be in a position to act quickly. She can make better decisions and have a real impact on the bottom line.

Business metrics assist with the decision to extend applications wirelessly to the mobile workforce. Key components of such an analysis should include both ROI and TCO measures. For example, an incredible ROI can be negatively offset by a large TCO. Similarly, a low TCO is meaningless if the ROI is not attractive.

Return on investment

ROI is a calculation of how long the initiative must be in use before the costs to implement it have been realized in new cost savings. Measurements for ROI can be classified as either hard savings or soft returns.

Hard savings occur when costs for other systems are displaced or reduced when wireless technology is introduced to the environment. For example, when an organization uses fewer laptops, the cost of purchasing, replacing, and supporting laptops is reduced. A mobile application that provides workers with immediate access to important information could help reduce voice calls back to the office to ask an assistant or colleague look up information.

Soft returns are realized in productivity increases and reduced errors. For example, mobile users can gain time in their day, improve their job satisfaction, and enhance customer satisfaction levels by accessing important corporate data on a wireless device.

Note: A comprehensive ROI analysis should at least include both hard savings and soft returns.

Total cost of ownership

TCO is the ongoing cost that is associated with running and maintaining the initiative. Within the wireless solution sphere, the benefits of wirelessly extending applications to mobile workers should be balanced against the costs associated with them. Potential measurement metrics may include the following elements:

- ongoing user training and education
- infrastructure and scaling costs as more wireless device users are added
- technical support for users, wireless devices, and software
- administration for adding and deleting users and setting permissions

Strategies for controlling costs

Planning helps to control the potential costs that are associated with implementing a wireless solution. Some planning strategies might include:

- standardizing the technology that is used behind the firewall
- making multiple types of devices and networks available to users
- evaluating security from a TCO perspective
- planning for future wireless usage

Standard technology behind the firewall

Standardization can be a key practice to help reduce TCO. In principle, multiple solutions that do the same thing behind the corporate firewall should be avoided. Different wireless devices connected to different solutions can often lead to a higher cost of ownership. This does not mean that you need to limit your organization to one wireless device model from one manufacturer. However, you should consider implementing a solution whereby all or many wireless devices are able to hook into the same solution behind the firewall.

Multiple wireless device types

Unless users have a range of choices, they will bring their own wireless devices into the office, which can increase TCO dramatically. Therefore, consider the different types of wireless devices using different technologies that the organization might be called upon to support.

Wireless devices differ based on network technology (for example, CDMA, DataTAC, GPRS, iDEN™, or Mobitex®) or manufacturer (for example, Research In Motion®). In addition to supporting multiple devices, global and national corporations typically require at least two relationships with wireless service providers.

Security platforms

Security is difficult to assess in terms of cost. Most companies find it challenging to determine what the cost might be of corporate data that is used maliciously or for an improper purpose. However, consider analyzing security from a technical standpoint and a TCO perspective. When evaluating security platforms, consider the following guidelines:

- Establish a robust security platform to limit viruses and Trojan horses from plaguing the enterprise's communication systems.
- Enforce the use of a managed control point for security behind the corporate firewall.
- Set policies so that users authenticate themselves at the wireless device level.
- Make transmissions secure from end to end.
- Use automatic control and intervention mechanisms to keep the TCO of the wireless solution down and the manageability high.

Lost or misplaced wireless devices

Plan for costs caused by user behavior. For example, users often lose or misplace wireless devices, forget passwords, or want to roam all over the world. A wireless solution should be designed to handle these types of issues. The IT policy feature that is included with the BlackBerry Enterprise Server™ software version 4.0, which lies at the heart of the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution, allows system administrators to create and push out wireless commands that enable or disable BlackBerry device functions. The BlackBerry Enterprise Server software version 4.0 also allows system administrators to issue wireless commands to erase all application data, set or reset a password, and lock a BlackBerry device. This functionality can be extremely important when system administrators must react quickly to a situation in which a BlackBerry device is lost or stolen.

Long-term wireless usage

Verify that the wireless solution provider has an enterprise-wide focus with scalable technology. Changing wireless solutions can be a large capital expenditure; therefore, you want to choose a wireless solution that can accommodate expansion and changing needs. User demand for wireless access tends to increase exponentially as soon as users begin using wireless technology. After just a few weeks of wireless email access, users typically begin to think of other ways to use wireless technology, so you want to make sure that the wireless solution you choose is flexible enough to accommodate these expanding needs.

Determining the value of wireless applications or solutions

The most important thing to determine with any type of wireless application or solution is the value of providing remote access to data. Consider the following questions to help determine the value of the wireless application or solution:

- What benefits will the wireless application's or solution's use bring to the organization?
- How will the wireless application or solution help reduce operating costs and increase employee productivity?
- Will the wireless application or solution increase revenue or improve the employees' ability to pursue business opportunities?
- Will the wireless application or solution increase customer or employee satisfaction?
- How will the wireless application or solution affect customer retention and employee productivity?
- Will the wireless application or solution provide a competitive advantage for the organization?

Conclusion

A primary strength of a wireless application is to ideally offer users a stable connection, regardless of location and enable users to access their information while on the go.

Pervasive applications such as email are a good starting point for companies that are beginning their wireless journey. These applications are often the easiest to identify and implement. When considering wireless access to corporate data beyond email, identify the problems and opportunities that exist, the expected returns, and the associated costs. This analysis will likely form the basis for making the business case to justify the investment.

Regardless of the wireless solution that you choose, it should be flexible, secure, and scalable beyond your organization's immediate needs.

Related resources

Visit <http://www.blackberry.com/go/platform> to read the *Extended Connectivity for the Enterprise: The BlackBerry Wireless Platform* white paper for information about how the BlackBerry wireless platform can deliver a proven wireless solution for the enterprise.

Visit <http://www.blackberry.net/select/roi/index.shtml> to read the Ipsos-Reid study for information about return on investment and the BlackBerry wireless solution.

Visit <http://www.blackberry.com/knowledgecenterpublic> for information about the BlackBerry Technical Knowledge Center.

Visit http://www.blackberry.com/news/events/web_seminars_archive.shtml to view the archive of BlackBerry product and service web seminars.

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Part number: WPS-20010-001

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