

➤ How to avoid the hidden costs of your mobile workforce

A guide to working with a specialist mobility partner

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Ryzex provides data collection and mobility solutions. We **advise** and implement the best solution, keep it running for maximum **uptime** and supply data for business **insight**.

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INTRODUCTION

While common perceptions of the mobile worker focus on sales executives and media types, industry research shows that as many as two thirds of UK mobile workers are actually represented by blue-collar workers. In fact, some of the biggest mobile success stories have come from areas such as field services, warehouse management, logistics and plant management.

Wherever your mobile workers fit into the organisation, it is vital to take into account the hidden costs that may be quietly accumulating throughout the lifetime of your mission-critical mobile solution. These costs rarely appear on the balance sheet; but if left unchecked they can impact an organisation's growth, productivity and competitive advantage, as well as its ability to effectively manage and mitigate risks.

A growing number of organisations are opting to work with a specialist mobility partner to help their mobile workforce become more productive, while managing costs. In this paper we highlight five key areas where your mobility partner can help you take effective action to avoid hidden costs.

1. DEVELOPING A FUTURE PROOF MOBILE STRATEGY

A strategic approach to mobile deployment is vital to ensure that your workforce and work processes continue to benefit from the rapid development of mobile hardware and software in today's fast moving world. A well thought-out mobile strategy will ensure your investment produces lasting business benefits, as well as short-term productivity gains.

The first step to future-proof your solution is to base your business mobility plan around the needs of workers, based on job functions and locations. It is vital to understand that a one-solution-fits-all approach towards mobility is a recipe for failure. In essence, you will need to identify and profile your different mobile workforces and understand the specific requirements of each group.

It can be a daunting task to consider your evolving mobile needs from every perspective. It is for this reason that many companies choose to work with expert mobility integration partners. This gives them the opportunity to tap into expert advice and make decisions based on extensive experience of mobile deployments to develop a policy of continuous innovation while minimising risk.

2. RISK FREE DEPLOYMENT

One of the most important factors to consider for your mobile rollout is the risk of failed or unsatisfactory deployment which can lead to a wide range of hidden

costs, from slow user adoption, to lost productivity and IT service costs. And the risk increases if you are rolling out a solution to a large, widely-distributed mobile workforce.

Effective project management is vital to ensure on-time project deployment and help you to avoid complex, resource-draining trouble-shooting in the critical early stages of your mobile strategy implementation. Make sure your project plan takes into account both the location of your workforce and the means of distribution and maintenance. In addition, it is vital to manage the staging of devices, to ensure the correct settings and applications for every device and avoid introducing inconsistencies into the estate and storing up potential problems for the future.

By opting to work with a mobility specialist, you can help ensure that nothing is overlooked in your deployment and guarantee a smooth rollout. Make sure your chosen partner can demonstrate an excellent track record of successful implementations. Ultimately effective project management will lead to faster productivity gains and encourage successful user adoption.

3. SELECTION AND EVALUATION OF DEVICES

Once you have defined your organisation's mobility strategy, the next step is to start evaluating devices and solutions. The sheer choice of hardware available today can make this a bewildering and time-consuming process. This is especially true of rugged devices, where it is vital that

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your hardware meets the needs of specific work processes and environments, whether in the distribution centre, in manufacturing environments or out in the field.

The longer mobile devices are exposed to high-usage working conditions where drops are common, extremes of temperatures are experienced and equipment is exposed to rain, snow and humidity, the more value rugged construction can provide. So your selection process needs to balance cost with requirements such as size, weight, durability, and its ability to hold reams of data, as well as providing a satisfying user experience to speed up adoption and training.

You will also need to consider the likelihood and costs of software upgrades, the availability and stock costs of replacement parts, and the cost of supporting workers to become more streamlined in the usage process. Finally, on top of that, it is important to future-proof your selection. Over time, the needs of your mobile workforce can evolve from simple data capture tools to sophisticated devices that require the ability to enable real-time interaction with enterprise systems, connection with multiple networks and a user interface capable of managing complex applications.

If you are working with a mobility integration specialist, make sure you choose a partner with experience of deploying rugged devices in a wide range of work environments, including field service, facilities management, utilities and retail distribution. Their experience will help you mitigate the risks involved in choosing your hardware.

4. ENSURING THE UPTIME OF YOUR MOBILE SOLUTION

The old saying, "Time is money", still applies. Mobile devices cost the most when they fail. Research has shown that productivity loss from hardware failure accounts for 49% of the total cost of ownership (TCO). Typically mobile workers lose an average of 75 minutes each time their mobile devices fail, so ensuring and maximising the uptime of your technology solutions is perhaps the most critical aspect to cost savings in a mobile enterprise.

While selecting the most appropriate mobile device for the work environment can help to minimise downtime, to ensure maximum uptime you will have to pay attention to

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a multitude of mobile management issues including device malfunctions, upgrades to device firmware applications, the deployment of new applications or software and bug fixes. Adding to this, you will also have to consider device security to protect both the organisation and the mobile workforce.

But, if not managed carefully, dealing with these every day issues can become a daunting task, creating an additional administrative and cost burden. How can a mobility integration specialist help you overcome the cost and risk implications of downtime?

Your mobility integration specialist should ensure that these tasks happen seamlessly, with little or no effort from your side, by building mobile management features into devices, creating personalised systems management applications and managing routine tasks. They should also provide a trouble-shooting helpdesk service for your internal technical team and carry out ongoing, remote monitoring to pick up any problems, diagnosing whether these are software or hardware related and help you take preventative action to minimise downtime.

5. ACHIEVING LIFETIME VALUE

The importance of managing lifetime value is illustrated when you consider that price and maintenance contracts – the costs associated with mobile devices that are easiest to identify – in reality account for only 35% of the total cost of ownership. The remaining 65% is accounted for by "soft costs" such as support time, lost productivity and management of the device.

Ask yourself if your organisation can afford end user downtime in the field while you're trying to manipulate data or troubleshoot and fix problems? The answer is probably no. But it forms a part of the TCO that is not often considered beyond the deployment phase.

The first step to creating lifetime value is to have visibility of all your mobile assets, together with the management information that will be key to maintaining and protecting your hardware and software investment. By tracking each device it is possible to monitor and manage the costs associated with your entire mobile technology investment – and to reduce lost productivity, due to downtime, to an absolute minimum.

In addition to installation and support costs, mobile integration experts should recommend that TCO calculations should include learning costs, IT training costs, lost productivity, as well as safe and legal disposal of your end-of-life equipment. Once these costs are fully understood, the value of working with a specialist mobility partner, who can help with long-term budget management and eliminate unnecessary expenditure, becomes clear.

WHAT THE EXPERTS RECOMMEND

Mobility integration is radically changing the ways people work and reshaping the workplace itself. Equipped with powerful new mobility tools, employees today can work productively from virtually anywhere. But integrating a mobility strategy is not always simple. By choosing a partner with the right experience, together with the right mobile device management platform, you can minimise hidden costs and ensure maximum uptime, while also ensuring that your mobility strategy is based upon the insight you need to deliver value both today and in the future.

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Finally, if you are considering outsourcing some of your mobility requirements, the checklist below should help you to determine which areas you may want them to help you with:

- **Mobility strategy** – advice and insight into the needs of your organisation
- **Deployment services** – the ability to deploy mobility devices to the workforce without risk or interruption of services
- **Selection and evaluation of devices** – the ability to identify the device that meets your team's exact requirements
- **Mobility uptime** – the requirement to effectively manage your devices once the investment has been made to ensure that your ROI is maximised
- **Mobile device management** – managing your devices from one central point while they are still in use out in the field. This can include:
 - o Asset management
 - o Software management
 - o Configuration management
 - o Performance & diagnostics
 - o Back-up & restore a device
 - o Security management

ABOUT RYZEX

Ryzex is the leading expert in deploying and managing enterprise wide mobility solutions both locally and globally. Ryzex advises on and implements world-class solutions utilising over 22 years of proven best practices, ensures the solution is always up and running for maximum operational uptime, and provides insight so investments continue to perform better. Offerings include mobile worker applications, rugged hardware, device communications, automated data collection with barcode and RFID, networking support and complete managed services.

Ryzex is headquartered in the United States and also has offices across Europe and Canada. Ryzex has helped over 1 million users of mission critical mobile technology across a broad set of markets to get the most from their investment. For more information, visit <http://uk.ryzex.com>



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