

# Going mobile

Exploring mobility solutions for your business **By Gary Grabowski**

**M**obile technology is easily defined as technology that makes it possible to work from anywhere. Solutions in mobile technology have been growing by leaps and bounds over the last year or two, so now may be a good time to explore mobility options for your business.

The workplace has continued to evolve beyond the traditional desktop environment as employees and workgroups are becoming more mobile. When your staff conducts business away from the office, they are losing valuable access to key applications, Internet content and communications tools. This separation from the desktop negatively impacts the productivity of both teams and individuals.

To respond to this disconnect between traveling workers and the resources they need, companies are extending network access to employees outside the office. Using virtual private networking (VPN) and wired and wireless LAN connectivity, companies are equipping workers with the tools needed to be more productive and responsive while working at home or on the road.

Mobility solutions allow organizations to become more productive throughout the workday by providing their employees with secure, wireless, high-speed access to the applications, content and communications channels of their choice.

Here are a few ways that mobile devices enable an organization to extend its traditional computing infrastructure to the farthest reaches of its business and to its mobile work force.

■ **Personal information management.**

Everyone can benefit from having access to their contacts, calendar and e-mail from wherever they are.

■ **Line of business applications.** Mobile workers can have remote access to dedicated business applications via a VPN.

■ **Documents.** Availability of word processing or spreadsheet documents along with Web pages and multimedia data via a laptop, hand-held device or even over a cell phone.



Mobility solutions provide employees who have traditionally relied on desktop PCs, planners, spiral notebooks and sticky notes with real-time access to important information, no matter where they are.

There are many industries with high concentrations of mobile professionals that are already experiencing improved efficiency through mobility solutions.

■ **Health care.** Allows doctors quick access to patient information, and helps with writing drug prescriptions, tracking flow of drug inventory and increasing data accuracy.

■ **Law.** Attorneys can gain access to data from anywhere — documents, e-mail, applications, etc.

■ **Real estate.** Realtors have real-time access to property information, the ability to submit listings remotely and show virtual tours of properties via their laptop.

## Getting connected

A growing number of hotels, restaurants, airports, coffee shops and other businesses

are beginning to provide free wireless LAN access for customers access the Internet. The increased availability of public hotspots offers significant benefits for properly equipped business professionals.

Keep in mind that public hotspots are by no means as secure as your company's internal wireless network. You should be sure you are logged into your company's virtual private network before you access or send confidential documents over a public hotspot's network. Usually, the encryption offered by your company VPN will keep prying eyes from reading any bits of data they might snag out of thin air.

## Benefits

Transforming to a mobile environment helps in many ways.

■ Connect your employees to clients and critical business information 24/7

■ Increase revenues through enhanced sales productivity

■ Expand your workplace with lower operating expenses

■ Boost customer satisfaction by increasing responsiveness and face time.

When you take wireless to the next level and deploy mobility solutions like mail, messaging and work force automation, you will see increased mobility, flexibility, time savings, productivity, responsiveness and collaboration throughout your business.

Obviously, technology, people and business processes must come together synergistically for the full benefits of mobility to be realized. Building a mobile environment perhaps has less to do with evaluating and installing technology than with creating a corporate culture around mobility that includes behavioral norms and best practices.

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