



The Hidden Costs of Using Consumer-Grade Mobile Technology

ALIGNING THE DESIRE FOR MOBILITY WITH THE NEED FOR BUSINESS-CRITICAL PERFORMANCE

The success of your mobility investment is in great part contingent on the devices you deploy.

Companies are increasingly turning to mobile technology to help drive the next level of productivity, efficiency and service in their organizations. In Gartner's 2012 EXP CIO Survey, mobile technologies in the wholesale distribution industry were ranked as the highest priority,¹ while manufacturing CIOs placed mobility as the second highest technology priority for their organizations.² For field survey respondents of an Aberdeen Group study, mobility of technology was deemed "very important" not only for ramping up productivity and profits, but also for slashing errors.³

Yet, as these same companies rush to embrace mobility for critical line-of-business applications, they increasingly run the risk of sabotaging their own efforts. By selecting the wrong mobile technology — based on incomplete or incorrect information — they fail to realize the true benefits of mobility.

The purpose of this paper is to provide insight about mobile technology investments, so those in manufacturing, wholesale distribution, logistics, warehousing, and field service operations can make the best decisions for their businesses.

While your choices of mobile solutions are wide, few options can meet your needs for business-critical hardware, software, accessories, and service plans. What's the difference? Too often, consumer-grade mobile devices — not designed for enterprise usage — introduce unforeseen complexities and hidden costs, such as the following:

- Rapid device and technology obsolescence
- The need to purchase additional peripherals software, or services
- Device downtime impacting productivity and customer service
- The high expense of replacements instead of repairs

By contrast, your organization stands to gain tremendous advantages from mobile technology that is purpose-built for use in demanding line-of-business applications. The return on investment is wide and deep, and includes the following:

- Significantly lower total cost of ownership (TCO)
- Unstoppable durability
- Exceptional audio quality in loud environments
- Seamless roaming and lightning-fast connectivity for full speed workflows
- Best-in-class bar code and RFID scanning capabilities
- Full shift battery power
- Rock-solid security
- Three-year committed build cycle with minimum three-year support post sale
- Simplified device management

By 2015, enterprise mobile workers are expected to be using almost 500 million mobile devices, driving demand for robust enterprise mobile management solutions.⁴



Consumer-Grade Cost Centers Exposed

POST-PURCHASE BLUES

Opt for most consumer devices, and you may be stuck with a one-size-fits-all solution, forcing your organization to adapt to “features” that are undesirable for parts of your complex multi-environment, multi-workflow operation. Furthermore, to meet even the most basic environmental and workflow demands, you may need to purchase additional components to augment your fleet of devices.

Consider requirements like reading bar codes, taking payments, powering through a full shift, or surviving a drop without cracking the device. Even if your organization only requires one of these capabilities, the costs associated with augmenting consumer-grade technology to meet any of them remain — and they are passed on to you after your initial purchase.



HIGH CHURN RATES STIR TROUBLE

Additionally, the speed at which technology changes makes most consumer-grade devices obsolete within 18 months, on average.⁵ Can your company afford to replace mobile devices at this rate, no matter how inexpensive they initially appear? And this is not all. What if a device breaks beyond repair and the latest version has different dimensions or connectors making the accessories, cases, pouches, sleds, scanners, and chargers obsolete? Or consider the release of a new operating platform that prompts your worker to download and install the latest version in the middle of a shift. What happens if the new operating system is incompatible with one of your critical line-of-business applications? Eventually you will be forced to manage a mixed fleet of devices and software, adding to your IT support complexity and costs.

SHORT LIFESPANS

Replacement over repair is yet another downside to most consumer-grade mobile solutions. Many mobile technology providers make repair a complicated, lengthy process or may not provide a comprehensive coverage option at all.

Even more troubling, short device lifespan means that upgrades are extremely limited or nonexistent, and replacing a broken device in the middle of that lifespan can quickly spoil your well-intentioned plans for a uniform and smooth rollout.

THE HIGH PRICE PAID

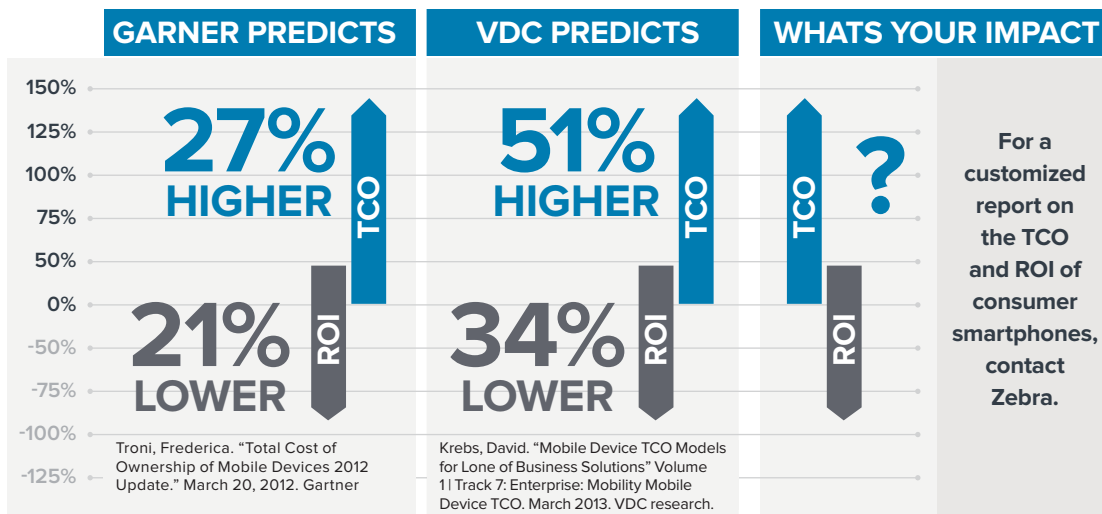
As a result, your business risks being beholden to technology that doesn't truly suit your requirements, despite the lower initial acquisition cost. These consumer-grade devices, and the technology they depend on, do not evolve at the same pace as your business' needs. As inexpensive as they may look at first, they can actually extract a high price in additional accessories and peripherals, rapid obsolescence and potential downtime.

Impacts of the Hidden Costs of Consumer-Grade Technology

Simply deciding to purchase and deploy mobile devices is not enough to guarantee peak performance. If your devices are not optimally matched to your enterprise requirements, they can hamper the productivity and efficiency of your employees, ultimately limiting the benefits your mobile technology investments will deliver to your customers and your business.

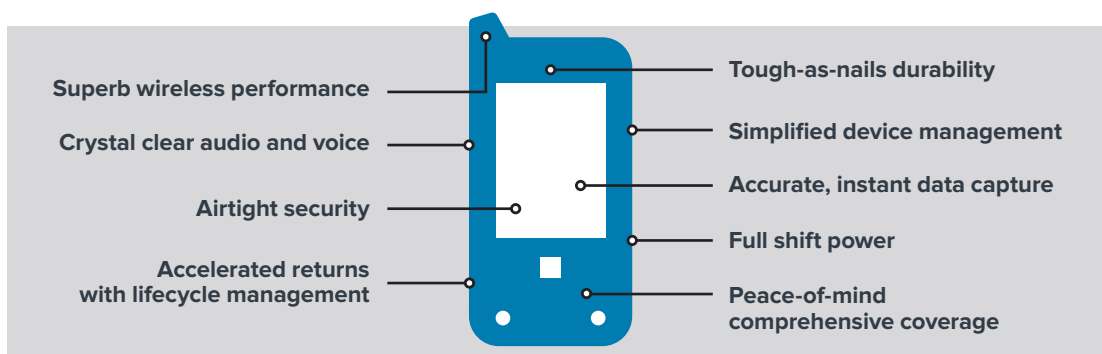
LOWER TCO THAN A SMARTPHONE

Experts agree: Consumer smartphones increase TCO by up to 50 percent compared to ruggedized devices.



SOURCES OF ENTERPRISE VALUE

Enterprise-grade devices are rich in benefits that add long-lasting value to your organization and bottom line.



MAKING THE RIGHT MOBILE SOLUTION CHOICE

This illustration clearly shows that simply implementing mobile tools is not enough to guarantee peak performance. It takes selecting the right devices to ensure that customer service needs are met and that subsequent costs associated with implementing and maintaining the technology are minimized. The investment required is significant — on the devices themselves, necessary training, possible new software tools, appropriate wireless networks, and more. Considering all the many different factors, your mobile solution decision should not be taken lightly.



The Power of a Purpose-Built Approach

By opting for purpose-built mobile technology for each worker and process, your company can exercise greater control over the features you want and the pace of when you want them. That's because enterprise-grade devices are typically engineered with specific use cases and requirements in mind and are available in numerous form factors with varying operating systems, keyboard options, screen sizes, and connectivity options. This enables your business to maximize end user productivity, while also protecting your investment and complying with IT standards.

ACCESS TO THE TECHNOLOGY YOU NEED WHEN YOU NEED IT

Consumer-grade devices are not inherently designed to accept add-ons or upgrades as the technology evolves. Essentially, what you purchase is what you're stuck with until the devices wear out. As a result, you may have to completely scrap your old systems and start from scratch when devices become obsolete or unusable from normal wear and tear.

Compare that to purpose-built, enterprise-grade solutions that provide access to the newest technologies without the hidden costs experienced with consumer-grade technology. Consider graphics-rich applications developed in HTML5 that can be used on devices running traditional operating systems, as well as with newer operating systems, providing native application experiences that are user-friendly, compelling and intuitive. In addition, new chipsets allow your business to run one operating system on your devices today, and switch to a completely different operating system (not just a newer version) in the future as your requirements and needs change.

Enterprise-grade solutions also offer software-defined or field-swappable radio technologies that allow a single device to operate on multiple cellular networks. And you can replace parts of a damaged device instead of replacing it with a new device — especially important as replacement cost for consumer devices often come without the subsidy available during the original purchase. Finally, many enterprise-grade devices feature adaptable architectures that allow new capabilities to be added to previously deployed devices, as your requirements change. Operator training is minimized because employees are simply getting an upgrade to a device they already know how to use.

REDUCED DOWNTIME

Enterprise-grade devices are known for their durability and reliability. Yet even the most intelligent products need a maintenance plan and a support strategy. After all, accidents happen — and when they do, you will want to know the support you need to keep your equipment running at peak performance is right at your fingertips.

To help minimize equipment downtime, you may consider investing in a holistic support program that can remove the worry associated with having a non-functioning device. Support features like comprehensive repair coverage, which includes accidental breakage, or advance exchange, which overnights a replacement device, can help ensure that your business can maintain its productivity level as devices are repaired or exchanged.

Another key element to minimizing downtime is being proactive. A device management tool can help your business stay informed regarding the health of its devices. From tracking battery life, to identifying which employee has a certain device, to understanding how reliably the device is connecting to the WLAN network, understanding these and other important device metrics can allow for early issue identification and resolution. That goes far to help you reduce device downtime and save money and time by instituting effective management across your entire fleet of devices.



In addition, a lifecycle management service can help lower your risks and accelerate your return on investments. Assuring the sustained availability and performance of business-critical mobile-device environments requires strong operational support for deployment, management, service and ongoing performance analysis. However, finding the expertise and deploying the resources required for a large mobile device rollout takes time and money, and an ineffective implementation can have a real financial impact on your business. A mobility lifecycle management service can remove uncertainty and establish predictability in the creation and management of complex, multi-operating system mobile device environments.



Succeed By Selecting an Experienced Partner with a Purpose-Built Portfolio

Implementing inadequate technology can waste resources, hinder productivity and lessen your company's competitive advantage. So how does your business avoid these hidden costs? By choosing purpose-built, enterprise-grade technology from the start.

The work your teams do every day and every shift isn't "one size fits all" or easily replaced. Why should the technology they use be any different?

Zebra understands this. As a leading manufacturer of rugged handheld computing solutions available in numerous form factors, we can offer you a wide set of native options for connectivity, power management, operating systems, scanning and payment to fit the specific needs inherent to your company and your mobile workforce. And as your business' needs evolve, so do your choices. Our broad portfolio of purpose-built and widely deployed mobile solutions can serve you today and tomorrow, always providing you with the benefits of the latest advances in technology with none of the hidden costs associated with consumer devices.

Our range of device management solutions, from a do-it-yourself option to full-managed service, provides a rich array of features to remotely control, track, update and manage your fleet of handheld devices and computers. This helps ensure that your business-critical devices deliver the functionality they were deployed for — all the time — every time.

Trust our solutions to extend and protect the usable lifecycle and significant investments you have in technology, whether in purposeful durability or extreme industrial ruggedness and modularity. We can help you select, design and implement your own "perfect fit" solutions, while controlling costs and securing your ability to profitably serve your customers. You can enjoy all of the benefits of the latest mobile technologies, without any of the hidden costs.



Move Business Forward with Zebra Mobile Computers

Transform your enterprise and empower your workforce to be their best in every moment that matters. With a Zebra enterprise mobile computer in hand, workers can access the information, applications and people they need to get the job done. The result? Productivity is up. And your customers experience the best service possible.

When you choose Zebra, you're in good company. The world's largest manufacturers, transportation and logistics companies, field sales and service organizations, retailers and healthcare providers rely on Zebra mobile computers every day to turbocharge their businesses.

Sources

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