



# DeCISion



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## Welcome to the July Issue!

Dear Valued Readers,

With July now here, we have officially reached the half way mark of the year. Winter is well and truly upon us. The days seem shorter and the mornings are colder; even the warmest jacket seems to let in the chill. Nevertheless, the financial calendar has entered a new year, with the refreshing breeze of new opportunity and optimism setting the scene.

Smartphones play a major role in many organisations but some are still trying to understand the benefits that deployment of such technology can provide. In this month's DeCISion, we look at the advantages of Smartphone use in business and consider some of the common issues encountered during implementation, best practices and security.

Earlier this year, CIS integrated smartphones into our business. We addressed all the issues discussed in this months article and are now enjoying the benefits of the change. At CIS we are a mobile workforce as we are regularly onsite with our customers and technical teams. We have found that implementation allows our support and consulting staff to be more responsive and connected to both our customers and our technical team.

We hope you enjoy this edition of DeCISion – and look forward to seeing you next month.

Happy reading, Stephanie Olszak & The Team at CIS.

## Smartphone Integration - potential effects on businesses

Written by Hannah Wiggins

While smartphones may seem ubiquitous today, with everyone from the busy professional to the socially-engaged student sporting highly complex and ultra-compact mobile devices that act as a kind of secondary computer, the establishment of the smartphone as a communications and organizational staple has been marked by time and various logistical challenges. First arriving on the business scene in the mid-1990s, smartphones initially offered basic capabilities such as world time clocks and calculators in addition to the desirable feature of email transmission and receipt. As the degree of complexity of smartphones has grown remarkably over the years, the use of such devices within the business environment has become dramatically more widespread. Though early adopters largely consisted of businesses accustomed to relying on small electronic devices for operations, such as couriers and other enterprises with employees in the field, the ability of most businesses to benefit from smartphone integration has become increasingly clear, persuading project managers, team leaders, CIOs, and other business leaders to seek out a smartphone deployment of their own.

Through the adoption of smartphone use across a single department or an entire organization, businesses can take advantage of some of today's best and most exciting technologies in a meaningful

way without having to make significant changes to infrastructure. Whether smartphones are purchased in sets to be distributed among users or employees are simply encouraged to access business networking resources and applications through their own devices, the ability to synchronize data and take advantage of an ever-growing collection of industry and task specific tools can help make a myriad of processes more efficient. The storied food product firm Heinz is among the many major businesses that have successfully implemented smartphones into their operations. The company worked with a paper-based system for obtaining information about their brand in stores, and recognized the need for a more streamlined and less work-intensive process. Through the adoption of smartphones, Heinz found that workers were able to improve communication and organization while obtaining the desired brand information quickly –a result that allowed for a greater concentration on quality analysis. Affording its workers greater time and ease while obtaining faster, more accurate information, Heinz gained greater competitive advantages along with heightened employee satisfaction. Though smartphone implementation is likely to manifest in diverse benefits for different companies, the ability to increase core competencies and refine auxiliary processes is stable.

Of course, smartphones are not the only devices with portability and connectivity options, and some businesses have opted to employ items such as laptops,

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personal digital assistants, or regular "feature" phones to accomplish their desired tasks. While these devices certainly have relevance and usefulness in certain settings, the ability of the modern smartphone to combine and simplify many of the advantages of such items into a single product makes them more attractive for many.

Aside from the obvious abilities of calling, texting, and using email, smartphone users can enjoy a competitive and impressive application market, which produces specialized programs that can make nearly any business process easier and more uniform across networks. From assisting in automation to digitizing previously cumbersome or time-consuming processes and managing business data, such applications can become major business assets –ones that may be difficult to deploy through the use of other mobile products. The combination of portable size, relative durability, application access, and communications capabilities makes smartphones more attractive to businesses searching for ways to improve their operations –and their bottom line.

Approaching smartphone adoption and deployment, regardless of the benefits envisioned, can be a daunting prospect; along with potential costs and the choices involved surrounding device type, carrier, and development, concerns may arise about security as well as the quality of employee training and use. Through adhering to basic best practice guidelines, however, businesses can rely on a smooth transition to smartphone use with minimal disruption. As with any implementation strategy and precise planning is an integral component of successful smartphone adoption. Considering matters of budget is essential not only for up-front device costs but for carrier plans and subscriptions, as well. Some carriers may offer business training packages to help managers or entire teams better understand the abilities and limitations of a new smartphone

system. Addressing security concerns is also of great importance during the implementation stage.

Security within the scope of smartphone use pertains both to physical devices themselves and to usage policies. While most businesses are quick to protect their assets on computers with anti-virus software, encryption measures, and password locks, unfortunately smartphone use is less often marked by such preventive measures. Through employing existing security features or contracting for a customized solution, businesses can keep their data protected from outside threats, which must be treated with as much attention and diligence as traditional computer-based security compromises. Matters of access are especially relevant for businesses implementing a smartphone scheme. Some firms choose to allow employees to access sensitive data and networks through their own smartphone devices; in fact, a recent Forrester Research report found that around half of businesses in Europe and in the United States are allowing personnel to connect via personal smartphone devices. Even when company-owned devices are used, however, policies that govern how, when, why, and where business networks are accessed can make major differences in the quality of implementation results.

Issues of personal versus corporate use of devices and information is a common issue, and should be fully explored by a business and clearly communicated to users before the system is in place. Smartphones employ a number of different operating systems, each of which is complemented by a variety of security features. Learning about these features and devising a plan for using them is a wise idea for businesses, and taking common-sense steps such as creating data backups and keeping precise inventory details for units and accessories

is also advisable. The loss or compromise of the devices themselves should also be considered during the implementation process. A FusionOne poll found that over forty percent of users with mobile subscriptions had encountered problems stemming from the loss, theft, or damage of their devices. Considering protective accessories or equipment and developing clear usage policies can both help limit the potential downside of product loss.



Though smartphones may create an impression of difficulty or complication at the outset, they are rapidly becoming more widely recognized as tools that can, conversely, make business operations more competitive, manageable, and enjoyable. With basic consideration and the choice to forge ahead with the help of modern technology's many benefits, businesses can adopt smartphone systems to realize improvements in everything from workflow organization to inter-office communication and data gathering. Far from the humble models that marked the beginning of the smartphone era, today's devices are invaluable business assets that are changing the pace –and the interface-- of operations worldwide.

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"Everything you want is just outside your comfort zone."

Robert Allen