Moving Beyond Mobile For Mobile's Sake

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Mobile technology has revolutionized retail in monumental ways. Gone are the days when a customer entered the store as an empty vessel, made a purchase decision, and checked out at the nearest register. Today's customer is a savvy, time-starved, connected product connoisseur who is armed with a smartphone and a mission to find what they want, when they want it and how they want it.

In response, retailers are aggressively adopting the mobile technology necessary to quench consumer thirst for product knowledge and visibility. According to BRP 18th Annual POS Customer Survey, 89% of retailers will offer mobile solutions for associates within 3 years.

Aside from the fact that "consumers are using mobile as a part of their shopping experience and we need to be there," nearly one quarter of respondents cited "confusion in the marketplace about what makes a successful strategy" as a top inhibitor.

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The following brief will provide insight into some of the current mobile deployment challenges retailers are facing when rolling out a mobile solution. Specifically, the brief will offer five key considerations for a successful mobile deployment strategy that are helping leading retailers get it right the first time. In doing so, they are able to deploy a mobile solution with greater ease, on time and on budget.

Mobile Deployment Challenges

Probably one of the biggest revelations regarding the current challenges retailers face with mobile deployments comes from RSR's study The Impact of Mobile in Retail. The findings suggest that "even if budget is available, retailers are having an increasingly difficult time finding the resources needed to manage all of the available mobile opportunities."

Because mobile is arguably in its infancy, there are still so many new and unknown elements to learn regarding the nature of mobile deployments. It's also true that since every mobile device is so unique, the process of managing a variety of individual operating systems and applications has become exceedingly hard to do from a corporate standpoint. As a result, 47% of retailers surveyed that the top inhibitor to taking advantage of mobile opportunities is not having enough mobile resources to manage are the available opportunities.

Particularly practical when managing large-scale deployments of mobile devices, mobile device management (MDM) platforms such as AirWatch offer the ability to quickly enroll devices in the enterprise environment. An MDM platform also provides visibility and control over not only the corporate devices being utilized, but the employee-owned devices connecting to their enterprise networks and accessing corporate resources as well.

However, while a properly designed MDM platform is an essential part of a successful mobile strategy, it is only a piece of a much broader mobile puzzle. Industry experts, including Paul Siegerist, IT consultant at Level 10, say that as mobile technology evolves, retailers are now wrestling with larger operational challenges, such as:

- What are we really doing/trying to do with these devices?
- Are we maximizing the use of the devices we're currently deploying? If not, what functionalities can we add to increase efficiency?
- How do we need to use the devices to justify the capital expenditure?
- How do we become more profitable in our mobile operation rather than just doing it because our competitor is?

Part of the problem is the fact that an enterprise-wide mobile solution cannot operate effectively following traditional IT practices. In other words, mobile has progressed to such a point where relying on internal IT staff to figure out the answers just won't cut it anymore. Aside from their knowledge

as users of smartphones, members of the IT team simply aren't familiar with managing or governing the use of mobile devices on an enterprise level. Nor do they have the necessary manpower to effectively build and support a complex mobile environment.

What's more, 46% of retailers see difficulty getting IT resources for mobile projects, according to RSR 2016 Mobile Report.

Add the pervasive BYOD (bring your own device) culture to the mix, and there's whole new set of enterprise issues tackle.

For example, explains Siegerist, "An executive might be on a business trip with his smartphone and decides to check his BI data, so [the internal IT staff] have to be even more careful not to load anything locally because if it gets stolen, it's still accessible."

On the other hand, "if the phone gets lost or stolen and they remotely wipe it and it's found an hour later and [the executive] is in Europe, you're in trouble," he adds.

Given the certain software restrictions often enforced by individual OEMs, the process of maintaining things like PCI compliance, enterprise security, and business integrity has become especially tricky for retailers. In order to stay on par with the competition and keep stores running at peak efficiency, though, vigilance is key.

Siegerist adds: "You don't want your employees to automatically upgrade the mobile operating systems until the people you bought your software from give you the okay. The last thing you want to do is shut down the mobile registers in your store."

The Mobile Deployment Strategy: A Blueprint For Success

Just as a contractor follows a blueprint to build a sound structure, so, too, should a retailer when deploying a mobile solution.

Because it's become increasingly difficult to manage and maintain the various nuances of the mobile devices currently being used in the enterprise, experts stress the importance of developing a cohesive strategy before moving forward with any wide-scale mobile deployments.

In order to efficiently keep up with market requirements, leading retailers are enlisting the help of a retail systems integrator that can help them make relevant, profitable, market-ready decisions no matter what their positioning.

Here are five of the most important considerations that are helping retailers build a successful mobile deployment strategy right out of the gate:

1. Integration You have the devices, but how do you dovetail them into your existing systems? All too often retailers are unaware of the additional resource requirements of maintaining a mixed ownership mobile system. To efficiently keep up with market requirements, leading retailers are enlisting the help of a retail systems integrator that can help them make relevant, profitable, market-ready decisions no matter what their positioning. As stores continue in their expansion, having a single point of contact with the right experience in imaging, management of settings, and the proper registration of devices has become an invaluable resource.

2. Support You have a mobile strategy, but do you have a mobile support plan? A well-developed support plan encompasses five areas—BYOD, deployment, post-deployment break/fix or warranty management, operational issues, and MDM—and can also help retailers reduce TCO in their mobile deployments, by:

   • Eliminating new and unknown support burden from existing IT staff that don't have the necessary experience to deal with mobile devices;

   • Allowing internal IT to determine what their true support capabilities are and where they need to apply resources; and

   • Allowing companies to adopt new technology faster without building up internal resources.

3. Mobile Device Management (MDM) Do you have a full-cycle plan for your MDM? MDM is more than a selection of an MDM application. A seven-point lifecycle plan encompasses the preparation, implementation, configuration, pilot, production, vendor support and administration of a mobile deployment, and can greatly reduce execution risk and uncover any outstanding issues that should be taken care of before implementing a mobile device system.

   The initial preparation phase takes into account how prepared the company is to acquire mobile devices in its existing environment; it also outlines the physical requirements necessary to ensure a successful mobile platform operation. The subsequent phases of the plan help tie together the internal resources of the enterprise and the third party services needed to aid in the deployment of a successful mobile system.

4. Wireless Coverage Are you sure your devices won't lose connection when an associate is on the sales floor? Critical to any mobile deployment is complete wireless coverage and a secure wireless network from both a corporate and in-store perspective. In-store wireless site surveys will be needed to determine the necessary coverage. Do you have access to enough resources that can conduct simultaneous site surveys to help cut down on time/cost?

5. Vendor Consolidation Have you consolidated vendor services to increase efficiency? The average deployment project can incorporate anywhere from four to seven outside vendors for hardware procurement, staging/integration, maintenance, field services and help desk. The right integration partner can assist in all of these areas and help retailers increase their bottom line, eliminate vendor "finger pointing," and deliver project work on time.

Conclusion

It's a fact that mobile is here to stay and retailers looking to stay in business must rise to the occasion, but a fleet of shiny new devices will only get them so far.

One way leading retailers are improving the mobile experience and overcoming organizational challenges is by enlisting the help of a retail systems integrator. The Impact of Mobile in Retail study found that more than one quarter of retailers are leaning toward this growing trend to help guide them through "a bewildering mobile landscape."

Most importantly, by taking the time necessary to develop a comprehensive and cohesive mobile strategy at the inception of a mobile deployment, leading retailers are positioning themselves to consistently and effectively meet the expectations of today's savvy buyer.

LEVEL|10

Go Mobile Or Go Home

While the use of mobile technology in retail is still in its infancy, mobile technology has certainly become a way of 21st century living.

So ubiquitous is mobile, that the global research and advisory firm Forrester predicts that one billion people will own smartphones by 2016. To that end, 74% of customers browse on mobile devices while in store and 53% read user reviews while in store, according to RSR 2016 Mobile Report.

Because smartphones provide endless point-of-purchase and point-of-sale opportunities for retailers — including real-time product information, increased store traffic and alternate sales channels — there has been an increased interest in customer-facing mobile services.

Here's a look at some of the drivers behind retailers' current mobile strategies. The following priorities were cited as important/most important in the BRP survey:

Improve Customer Service - 97%

Drive Store Traffic - 97%
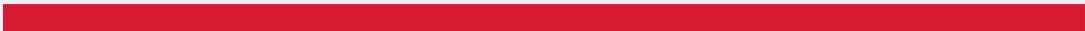
Increase Customer Conversion - 100%

With these goals in mind, 89% of retailers indicated that they either have implemented a smartphone app or have plans to implement one. And, while one-third of retailers surveyed in the study currently offer mobile coupons, specials, or personalized promotions as they walk in the store, 57% have plans to offer these services within the next few years.

But while things like mobile apps are important components of a retailer's mobile strategy, so is an optimized network that supports mobile commerce across a variety of devices and being equipped to support mobile payments at the store level. For many retailers, now, the question isn't which mobile solutions to implement, it's how to do it to make it all come together seamlessly for consumers.

97% Improve Customer service

97% Drive Store Traffic

100% Increase Customer Conversion

About Retail TouchPoints

Retail TouchPoints is an online publishing network for retail executives, with content focused on optimizing the customer experience across all channels. The Retail TouchPoints network is comprised of a weekly newsletter, special reports, web seminars, exclusive benchmark research, and a content-rich web site featuring daily news updates and multi-media interviews at www.retailtouchpoints.com. The Retail TouchPoints team also interacts with social media communities via Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

About Level 10

Level 10 is one company, everything IT. With more in-store technologies, less personnel resources and quicker deployment needs , we recognize retail IT teams need less partners to do more. By strategically bundling our services-hardware procurement, software development, asset management, maintenance & repair, in-field technician support and a 24/7/365 service support desk—we create solutions that allow an easy and enjoyable work life. We act as an extension of your IT team through technology & mobile deployments, store openings/closing/remodels, and in-store support work by increasing your service levels and project ease while decreasing cost and risk.

About AirWatch

AirWatch is the leader in enterprise-grade Mobile Device Management, Mobile Application Management and Mobile Content Management solutions designed to simplify mobility. More than 7,000 customers across the world trust AirWatch to manage their most valuable assets: their mobile devices, including the apps and content on those devices. Our solutions are comprehensive, built on a powerful yet easy to use platform by leaders in the mobile space.

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