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Mobility Is Exploding: Are You Ready?

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Executive Summary

The mobility race is on, fueled by the success of the iPad. After several decades of fits and starts (remember the Newton?), Apple's iPad succeeded where all others failed, ushering us into the era of mobile computing. Forrester Research predicts tablets will outsell laptops by 2015, and smartphones will outsell both by a large margin. IT departments are following suit, with 75% either developing apps for mobile devices or evaluating the use of tablets in the workplace. Just like that, it's an untethered world.

What does this sudden shift to mobile devices mean? Forrester analyst Ted Schadler summed it up nicely with *displace*, *replace*, and a *new place*. These devices will *displace* laptops, *replace* reports, and extend computing to *new places* it has never been before. Just as email migrated into the cloud and onto mobile devices, industrial-strength apps are poised to follow. Perhaps the most transformative will be mobile business intelligence—what will happen when analysis tools migrate from the desktop to decision-making sweet spots?

Mobile business intelligence (BI) replaces static information with real-time information, empowering data-driven decisions on the spot. Mobile BI places live data and analysis in the hands of workers who never had it before, expanding BI's scope and applications. The use cases for mobile BI could fill a book, and many are yet to be imagined. This white paper describes a few of the use cases to whet your appetite so that you can consider the possibilities for bringing not just BI, but business discovery, to the front lines of your business.

Why mobile business discovery?

With traditional BI, you can't do ad hoc analysis on the fly. Traditional BI offers answers to questions you thought of beforehand. Business discovery lets you ask questions spontaneously. Mobile business discovery takes this to the next level, letting you ask questions anytime, anywhere. So the next time an executive stops you in the hallway or a customer asks you a question at lunch, with mobile business discovery, you can find an answer right on the spot.

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Use Case: Displacing Laptops: The Pharmaceutical Rep

A mid-sized pharmaceutical company equipped its sales force with tablets to help them analyze billions of weekly sales records in their "decision sweet spot"—before and during sales calls with doctors and hospitals. Although their tablets proved capable, the company's SAP Business Intelligence did not—reps found it too slow, too heavy-duty, and too inflexible to be useful.

Instead, the company developed a series of intuitive analytical apps. One tab contained an overview of the sales rep's activities, an analysis of the company's products versus the competition, and another breaking it all down by doctors and specialties.

Field sales reps could quickly ask, "What's the best-selling drug in this region?" or "How are this doctor's prescription patterns different from other doctors?" What used to take field sales reps 15 minutes to determine by comparing reports now takes less than 60 seconds and can be done on the fly, where and when it needs to be—right before the rep walks into their next meeting. The apps have led to a dramatic uptake in data consumption by field sales reps, who often hadn't bothered to download the latest reports.

Use Case: Taking Data to a New Place: Field Service Technicians

The way the service industry works today, a field service technician goes to a customer site and diagnoses a problem. The technician then calls someone to describe the problem and get approval for the recommended solution. Is the repair under warranty? Is the customer in good standing? If the part is not on the truck, where can I get it? Is this a repeat repair? And the questions go on.

Figure 1 shows how mobile business discovery can empower workers, accelerate business processes, and help deliver an experience that will delight the customer. Business processes can be sped up as well. If the customer needs an accessory or supplies, the service technician (or salesperson) can provide or order the items and invoice the customer right on the spot.

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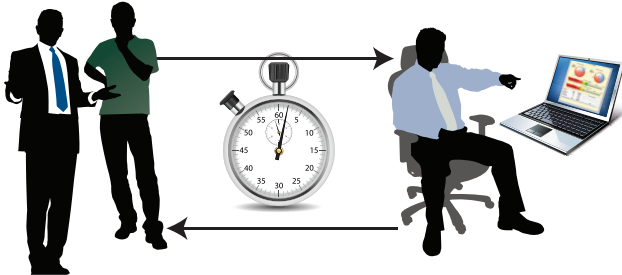
Slow and indirect: "I'll have to call the office"
* Technician calls the office to provide situational
  information to someone else
* Technician must ask for additional data from the
  office worker
* Takes longer
* Frustrating to worker who can't resolve problem
  for customer in a timely fashion

Fast and empowered: Data-driven
decisions on the spot
* Technician can supplement diagnostic
  data with business intelligence about
  the customer
* Technician is empowered
* Situation is resolved quickly and
  profitably

Figure 1. Mobile business discovery empowers workers wherever they are

Use Case: Bringing Business Discovery to the Fast Moving Game of Retail

Retail outlets often carry hundreds of items, and coordinating promotions properly is a challenge. Consider a case where a store manager goes on a floor walkthrough with a category manager to discuss an upcoming promotion. They talk about the different types of products they need and notice that some items will be unavailable. They use a mobile business discovery app to look at the current rate of sale for the products in question and view inventory across locations.

The store manager uses an app to look at in route delivery data for the entire district, which pulls in logistics data. Although there's no replenishment planned for the products they need, she can divert some deliveries to other stores to get stock to support the upcoming promotion. The store manager and category manager quickly generate an alert through the trafficking department to reroute a delivery to their store.

Notice how this pushes decision making to the edges; decisions that would be made centrally about logistics and coordination across lines of business can occur in the field and on the spot.

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Use Case: Reining in Healthcare Spending on the Spot

Hospital supply chains are complex, purchasing thousands of unique items daily, ranging from artificial hips and drug-coated stents to cotton swabs and syringes. Pricing is opaque, ordering is just-in-time, and, for doctors, cost is no object. Reining in spending can be difficult.

Last summer, a network of not-for-profit healthcare organizations rolled out a new supply chain app for the Apple iPad and iPhone across its hospital members. Each hospital has a director of materials management (DIMM) who works with physicians and managers to handle purchasing. A busy doctor may make a request right in the hallway. With the app in hand, a DIMM can look up catalogs to see what the doctor is buying and its price curve, which helps the DIMM gauge potential savings if the price can be renegotiated. Armed with his iPad, the DIMM can instantly check stent prices the physician is urging him to buy and can show the physician high-quality but lower-cost alternatives that still support excellence in patient care. For the first time, the DIMM has a clear view of the hospital's supply chain wherever and whenever, as well as (somewhat) transparent pricing.

Benefits of Mobile Business Discovery

Enables more people to benefit from on the spot analysis that can:

* Empower workers by pushing decisions to the edge

* Enable faster, informed decisions

* Increase customer satisfaction

* Increase profits

* Decrease margins

* Speed up business processes

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Use Case: Replacing Static Reports in Financial Services

A regional sales manager visits financial advisors at branch locations. During the visits, the sales manager talks with the advisors about their territory plans, who they are currently selling to, other opportunities to consider, and how to better target new business.

The sales manager does some upfront analysis on her tablet device. She looks at the performance of this particular region and considers which products sold and which didn't, as well as which key customers purchased and which didn't. The manager then walks in with her tablet and uses the information in the conversation with the financial advisor at the branch. The branch personnel can see where they rank in relation to their peers, what types of customers they're targeting successfully, what types of customers they're not targeting successfully based on some demographic data that they have. Together, they jointly test scenarios, performing what-if analysis. What if you sold 20% more to this customer? What would that do to profitability? What if you sold 20% more of this type of product, which is more profitable than that other product? Only a platform that enables mobile business discovery can provide the capabilities to support on the fly and ad hoc analyses such as these.

The result of this analysis is a more refined sales plan. The aggregate of improvements at all the branches, supported by data from mobile business discovery, tips the bar on the profitability for the entire bank. By using information to drive all the decision-making processes, each decision is incrementally better, ultimately accruing significant value.

Field Information Plus Mobile Business Discovery Equals Transformation

The following table summarizes the impact of mobile business discovery for each use case and generalizes them to help you consider the possibilities.

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Use Case	Before Mobile Business Discovery	After Mobile Business Discovery
Sales preparation	Compare reports and eyeball the numbers; use intuition and experience to guide you	Enable sales rep to conduct analysis in the decision-making sweet spot—before and after a sales call
Service	Technician goes on site, describes problem, calls to determine next steps, may have to leave to get parts or schedule a second service call	Technician goes on site, determines what to do and what is needed and assesses how to best serve the customer and the business, fixes the problem, and invoices on the spot
Procurement	Procurement analyzes ongoing reports (monthly and quarterly) in back office to create optimal pricing and contracts	Procurement can enable onsite material managers to execute real-time product and pricing options. By enabling procurement to play a more collaborative role, decision-making is driven to the edges
Crossing lines of business (retail)	Promotions require coordination between many departments and must be done centrally rather than on the floor—at the point of sale	Advantage of mobile BI, retail clerk can look at promotional and inventory data, on the floor, at the point of sale and make on the fly decisions
Sales coaching	A sales manager visits branches and examines sales process. He goes back to the office, analyzes data, prepares and sends reports to branch, a static and time-consuming approach	Branch and sales manager conduct onsite evaluation and perform what-if analysis together to see what changes could be made to increase profitability. Approach is faster, more collaborative, and can accelerate profitable change. Branch manager implements sales strategy in real-time

Field information, information about what is happening on the spot, has always been available to workers on the go. That's why they go into the field. What has been missing to date is the ability to enrich that context with business discovery: the ability to ask questions on the fly based on data from a variety of sources.

Add information from backend systems and other data sources in a visualized form that supports good decision-making and it's easy to see that mobile business discovery can be game changing. Mobile business discovery is going to put information in the hands of workers who have never had access to the information before in a simple consumable form.

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Requirements for Effective Mobile Business Discovery

Ubiquitous: Mobile business discovery should be available everywhere

Consistent: The app looks the same no matter what device you use it on

Intuitive: Easy to use, just like consumer software

Enterprise-ready: Scalable and easy for IT to widely deploy

Secure: Corporate data is safe

Any data, live data, anywhere: Incorporates multiple data sources; uses live data, not snapshots

Manageable: Develop once, but app appears native on the device. Distribution of the app is easy

Empowering: Mobile workers explore data and ask questions, not just view canned reports or analyses

Conclusion

Mobile business discovery offers new possibilities to bring informed answers right to the spot where people are asking questions. This paper has provided a glimpse into some of its game-changing facets.

Mobile business discovery will revolutionize the way people work, in the office, in the field, as physical boundaries fade. Take some time to think about what augmenting situational intelligence—with the ability to answer questions from data sources on the fly—could mean for *your* business.

Whether you're at a business lunch, on a customer site, or preparing for a meeting, the more contextual information you have, the better. The greater question now is how you can take advantage of this new capability.

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