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How mature is your mobile strategy-White Paper

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How mature is your mobile strategy-White Paper

Mobile Innovations - Happening at an unprecedented rate!

Mobile will soon be the most important digital channel. In fact, mobile devices have the potential to eclipse fixed devices attached to the Internet in the foreseeable future. They are the devices that consumers carry with them 24x7. Developing experiences for these devices requires strategic planning, new frameworks to evaluate technology decisions and the quality of the experience, and new analytical tools to measure performance. Today, consumer product and service companies are at different stages in developing their mobile strategies, products, and services to engage with consumers. Forrester offers research, data (both consumer surveys and forecasts) and tools that can guide clients through these processes, regardless of where they are on the mobile journey.

Customer Centricity Requires Comprehensive Technology Change

How does a customer-centric approach to mobile applications differ from web applications? Web interaction paradigms are single-threaded. But customer interactions span traditional, web, and mobile channels. Secondly, today's customers want a single experience, regardless of the number channels they employ, or complexity of the business systems that facilitate that interaction. This is the core of the modern user experience: seamless treatment across multiple channels and multiple applications.

The technology platform for meeting those heightened expectations must deliver on these expectations:

- **Intuitive operation -** Customers will not read documentation about using a mobile app. If it's not immediately usable and engaging, they'll simply delete it from their device. The supporting stack of information technology systems may be complex, but the user interface must not be. Additionally, security controls must match the true risk of the data at the time of the mobile moment. Don't put controls in place simply because they were there in the web version.

- **Task orientation -** Task-oriented experiences are a complete change in direction from the approach taken on web applications. Web applications try to offer multiple ways to access everything - for each and every browser user. Modern applications focus on executing a small number of tasks extremely well. And that means a surgical approach on the backend as well; versus web applications that often dictated large, monolithic data architectures.

- **Contextual experience -** Connected devices know more about their owners' immediate context and personal habits than their own family — truly personalized experiences must leverage this power without being obtrusive. Modern personalized experiences communicate the context of every data exchange.

- **Satisfying performance -** Today's customers are impatient. Apps that force customers to wait, risk losing the customers to competitors. Customer expectations for response time and rendering are increasing - right along with the scale of connected devices and interactions. What used to be proudly termed "web scale" is insufficient in the mobile world. And even mobile will pale relative to Internet-of-Things (IoT) scale.

White Paper Highlights

Mobile is hot!

As with most hot topics in technology, marketers may be tempted to adopt strategies that are a mismatch for their level of mobile marketing maturity. Or, to make matters worse, create upside-down strategies focus on technology first - rather than on people, objectives, and mobile moments.

In addition, most marketers are still in the early stages of mobile maturity, which further complicates the strategic planning process.

Four Elements of Foundation - for Mobile Strategy

These are the four high-level elements that form the foundation of a proactive mobile strategy:

1. Master a slew of new engagement technologies.
2. Build a cloud-based integration and delivery platform.
3. Simplify retrieving data from your existing transaction systems.
4. Implement a comprehensive analytics capability.

Success with mobile solutions demands simplicity and speed-to-market. The mobile offerings constructed by most companies are built atop incredibly complex information technology infrastructures — which completely flies in the face of customer demand for simplicity. The new mobile technology platforms bridge legacy back-office complexity with modern front-end simplicity. The new mobile platform, built for today's mobile strategy with an eye to tomorrow's connected device strategy, will be built on four technology elements:

1. **Simplified data access -** The core of any modern mobile platform is access to data from systems of record, business partners, third-party service providers… and even unknown connected devices. Simplified access will enable developers to feed content into the innovative experiences that help win, serve, and retain customers.

2. **Cloud-based delivery -** Between the customer-experience and the data, lies the middle-mile of network delivery — it cannot slow customer interactions simply because of physical distances between data sources and destinations. Data cached in or delivered through the cloud ensures that responsiveness is not delayed by physical barriers.

3. **Proportional security -** Mobile security requires a holistic look at the mobile moment in order to design appropriate security controls that don't detract from the experience. Optimally, these controls are invisible to the mobile app user. However, when that's not possible, they should be designed to be minimally invasive. Security controls that create barriers and cause significant delays and/or complexity, will drive customers into the arms of competitors.

4. **Analytics-based feedback -** Building experiences to exceed the needs of customers, requires direct customer feedback on how well those needs have - or have not - been met. Similarly, developers that build these experiences need immediate feedback from continuous integration, security, and quality processes - to eliminate delays between creation and deployment of apps.

Failure Is In The Cards Without a Focused Mobile Strategy!

Decisions have consequences, and successful IT professionals must constantly revisit their past choices. It's easy to base a decision to write a new CRM feature in Java or .NET - based on in-house technology and expertise . However, when making decisions about mobile, the sheer number of available technologies makes it impossible to take a "technology first" approach. To broaden your thinking beyond letting yesterday's infrastructure dictate tomorrow's choices, consider using the POST (people, objectives, strategy, and technology) methodology:

- **People: Who will be the primary users of this app?** What's the profile of your target audience? Is it comprised of task workers who need access to specific point-in-time data to complete a given process? Or field service employees who need full read/write access to enterprise CRM systems, to enable real-time decisions? Do you need to address more than a single user profile? Personas can guide your development cycles, but beware: Using too many personas indicates a lack of upfront focus.

- **Objectives: What are the objectives of this application?** Are you increasing revenue, decreasing cost, increasing worker efficiency, or some combination thereof? How does your objective fit (or conflict) with the overall objective of your brand? Will sales reps use this app to increase brand awareness? Should the application gather the user's location information? Should you generate native notifications for task-driven users to initiate business processes — or should you consider steps to guide this user to a separate device like a tablet or TV to drive deeper engagement? Continue your laser focus here! Detailed objectives simplify development decisions and stabilize project costs.
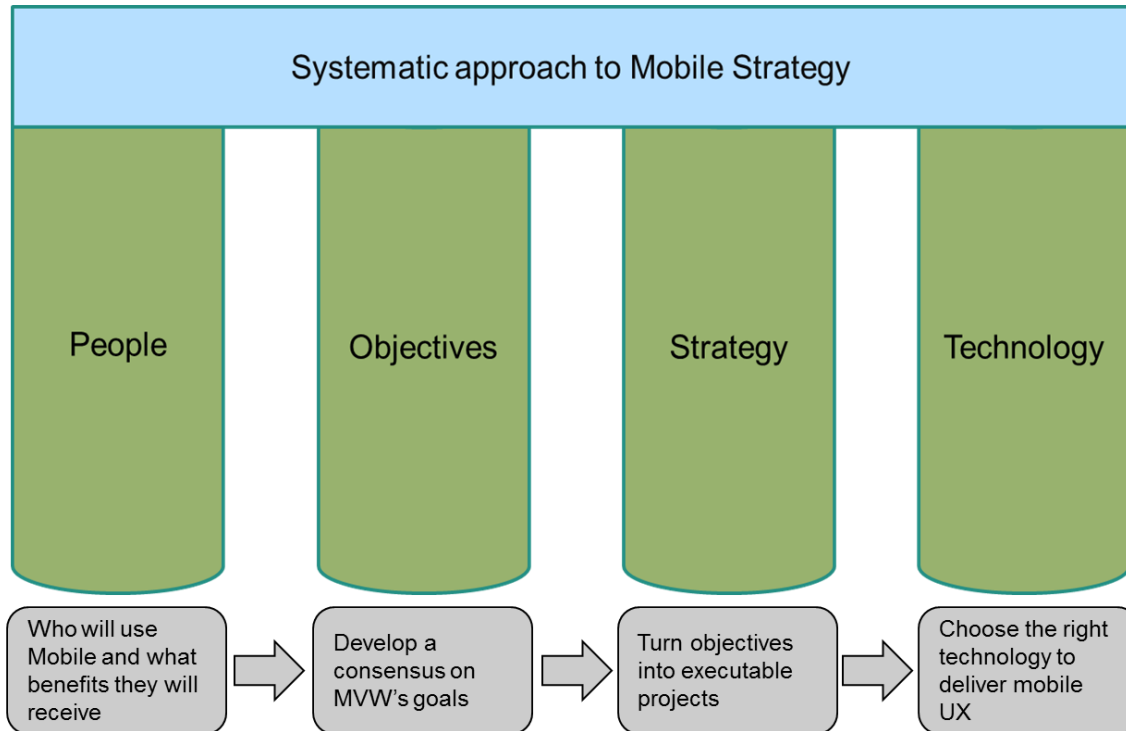
- **Strategy: What are the short-term and long-term strategies for this app?** Will this app satisfy the current business challenge - but be rendered obsolete in nine months by looming business or technical changes? How does this application fit your long-term strategy, sales initiatives, field force use cases, and executive dashboard decision-making processes? How will this app affect your enterprise infrastructure — and over what time period? How good does the application's user experience need to be? What's the projected number of users and how will usage scale? Overlook these strategic questions, and you risk your team's success.

- **Technology: Which mobile technology meets the goals of this challenge?** Mobile technology is where the glamor is. But if you've skipped any of the previous steps, the beauty will be only skin deep — ugly project failure will rear its head soon enough.

Systematic approach to Mobile Strategy

People	Objectives	Strategy	Technology
Who will use Mobile and what benefits they will receive	Develop a consensus on MVW's goals	Turn objectives into executable projects	Choose the right technology to deliver mobile UX

"Many clients come to us having already decided on a mobile technology without fully establishing the goals of the mobile app that they're looking to develop. If we don't solidify these decisions at the beginning of the project, it nearly always causes delays later on due to confusion in overall direction." (Dave Wolf, VP of strategy, Cynergy Systems)

The pattern for success is to realize that each mobile app has a best-fit technology that is determined by the first three steps in the POST process. Don't be a mobile technology lemming; simply because Facebook decided to move away from HTML5 doesn't mean that you should do the same.

Recommendations

Coordinate Internally to Build a Mobile Case

While there are clear quick wins when launching a mobile consumer presence, integrating mobile into a broader corporate strategy requires a systematic and cohesive internal approach. Based on a solid understanding of your target audience's behavior and of your mobile objectives, you can choose the appropriate tactics. We recommend that product managers and strategists in charge of defining and implementing their company's mobile product and services road map should:

- **Evangelize and collaborate internally.** Mobile is a new and emerging platform — one that is slightly more complex to understand than the online environment. Organizations need to better understand the benefits of mobility and the short- and long-term potential of the mobile platform. They should run brainstorming sessions to identify innovative ideas. The creation of a dedicated task force that meets periodically with representatives of multiple business units, is a best practice to centralize mobile initiatives and obtain agreement on mobile objectives across the organization.

- **Stop operating in silos and obtain top management validation.** Beyond evangelization, mobile strategy definition and implementation require a clearer organizational structure, and the designation of an executive in charge of coordinating the mobile consumer strategy. Mobile is of interest to interactive marketers, eBusiness leaders, and increasingly, CMOs who need to connect the dots on mobile. Make sure that top management validates the overall approach so that you can align the whole organization — including IT — with your new mobile strategic imperatives; and obtain the budget you need to define your mobile product and services road map.

- **Share the learning curve by implementing a common global and local mobile tool kit.** Global companies with multiple business units, brands, and subsidiaries in different countries need to define a common global mobile framework. Implementing common marketing guidelines and centralizing development costs, is a way to be more efficient and save money. In parallel, you need to localize your mobile approach to adapt to specific local mobile behaviors and ecosystems.

- **Build a business case with quantified and measurable mobile objectives.** Just agreeing on a qualitative vision is not enough. Even if objectives are limited, they must be quantified and measurable. Why? Results help to guide course corrections and adjustments. For example, costs add up quickly if you want to optimize the user experience for multiple platforms — but if you can't justify your spend with metrics other than direct revenues, it will be impossible to justify the ROI of mobile. This is not just common sense – it is proper business sense.

- **Implement key metrics and KPIs to track the progress of mobile.** Many players that Forrester interviewed do not measure usage of their applications; they just focus on the number of downloads or overall traffic to their mobile Web sites. Based on the objectives defined, you should track at least a couple KPIs on a monthly basis. On the one hand, we are still in the "early days" when it comes to mobile measurement. On the other hand, Best Practices are being established, consolidation is taking place, many startups and experienced players offer help… so start partnering with some of them. This is not the time to re-invent the wheel.

About Biz4Solutions

Biz4Solutions focus is Mobility. From simple apps to very complex enterprise solutions, Biz4solutions has the expertise to assist companies of every size.

Technologies:

- Sencha
- PhoneGap
- AngularJS
- Titanium
- Android
- iOS

Industries:

- Retail
- Hospitality
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing

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