



# MANAGING MOBILE DEVICES: THE NEW MSP OPPORTUNITY

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## Introduction

Just as it's hard to imagine banking without ATMs, computer users eventually will look back and wonder how they ever got by without smartphones or tablets. Network-connected smartphones, notebooks and tablets, according to analysts, will reach 15 billion worldwide by 2015 — more than double the planet's projected population. Mobile phones in 2013 will surpass PCs in connecting to the Internet, analysts predict. As of 2012, the number of smartphones in use worldwide had passed 1 billion.

Mobile computing is inevitable. Users want to carry their mobile devices at all times wherever they go, including the workplace. For employers, especially small and midsize businesses (SMBs), the proliferation of personal smartphones and tablets accessing their networks creates complex management challenges. Often, employers don't know who is bringing what devices into the office and how much corporate data is in them, which poses serious security risks.

This explosion of personal mobile devices in the workplace creates an opportunity for managed service providers (MSPs) to add value for SMB customers. Remotely monitoring and managing mobile devices is a logical extension of the services MSPs already provide. Bound by SLAs (service level agreements) to minimize downtime in their clients' networks and protect them against breaches and leaks, MSPs now have a perfect opportunity to also help clients meet the mobile device management (MDM) challenge. The most effective way to accomplish this is to integrate MDM with RMM (remote monitoring and management), and partner with a vendor that supports an integrated approach.

## The Mobility Necessity

Mobile devices have come a long way from the brick-like cellphones of the 1980s and laptops resembling oversized calculators. Today's smartphones have more processing power than the computers used in the Apollo lunar missions. From the PalmPilots of the 1990s to the near-ubiquitous Blackberrys of the 2000s to the explosion in smartphones in recent years ignited by Apple's iOS and Google's Android platforms, mobile computing has evolved from luxury to necessity. Today, conducting business without mobile access borders on the unthinkable.

Enticed by the functionality and features of consumer-focused smartphones and tablets, end users have made mobile devices a must-have in the workplace, forcing employers into a tough decision — to leverage or banish employees' mobile devices. Either choice carries risks. Leveraging the devices requires controlling them, while shunning them shuts out the benefits of mobility.

## Amplified Benefits

If computing itself is about efficiency and productivity, mobility is about amplifying those benefits. If you can carry the devices that make you efficient and productive, you can be efficient and productive anywhere, so long as you can access the data you need. Your ability to communicate improves, as does your responsiveness when called upon to perform tasks or share information.

A study of 752 small business mobile device users found precisely that. Ninety-four percent of participants in the 2012 Small Business Mobility Report, commissioned by solutions provider CDW, said smartphones, notebooks and tablets make them more efficient, and 75 percent said mobile devices are critical to their jobs. In addition, 67 percent said their businesses would suffer competitively without them.

Asked about specific benefits of mobile devices, respondents cited the following:

- improved communication between office and field staff (60 percent)
- increased availability to customers (60 percent)
- increased employee productivity (55 percent)
- better customer service (53 percent)
- improved collaboration between workers (45 percent)
- better work/life balance (35 percent)
- streamlined business processes (34 percent)

## Meeting the Challenge

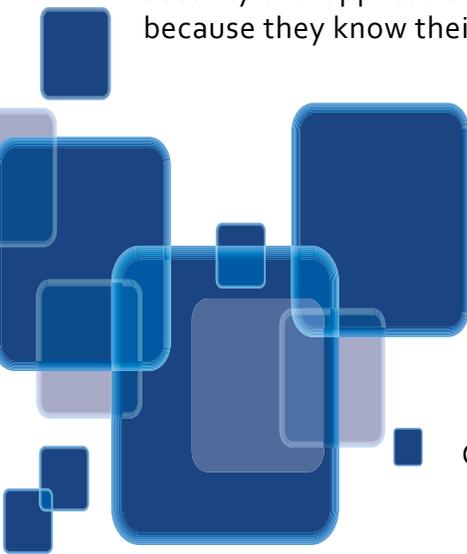
Employers typically issue laptops, but smartphones and tablets are owned by employees who bring them to work. As such, it's understandable that many employers may want to stem the flow of mobile devices into the workplace, but it could prove counterproductive considering the benefits. Still, embracing mobility requires a management strategy and the enforcement of policies to safeguard networks. Unlike the Blackberry, which was designed for business use, iOS and Android devices were built for consumers without the same security and management considerations.

For the most part, employers have a notion they must act to manage and secure the devices but don't know how. They don't necessarily know where the devices are, who owns them, and how much corporate data they access and store. It's a real danger because lost or stolen devices can place sensitive data and intellectual property in the wrong hands, and give network access to unauthorized users.

Employers need help. MSPs have to recognize this need as an opportunity to steer customers toward mobile device management. Whether businesses opt for a BYOD (bring your own device) or COPE (corporate owned, personal enabled) strategy, they need to invest in support, access, security and applications for the devices. MSPs are ideally positioned to help customers here because they know their clients' IT environments better than anyone – including the clients.

## MSP Opportunity

Customers want their MSPs to help tackle the mobility challenge. By January 2012, according to MSP Mentor, 70 percent of customers were asking MSPs about MDM, prompting writer Joe Panettieri to suggest, "Instead of trying to pitch and sell MDM, perhaps MSPs should simply spend more time listening to incoming customer requests." The implicit warning was that MSPs who are not ready, risk losing business. Clients might take their business elsewhere, and if they find another MSP for MDM, they are bound to shift all their business to the new provider. Clients want a single source of IT services and procurement.



MDM being a natural fit for managed services, it should be integrated into the overall service package. Standalone MDM solutions address a specific need, but they are point solutions that do not cover all the assets managed by MSPs. Integrated MDM, therefore, is an opportunity for MSPs to differentiate themselves to current and potential clients. It gives MSPs the chance to win business against competitors that don't offer MDM, and to use MDM as an entry point for businesses that don't yet use managed services.

This all translates to more revenue. MSPs who offer MDM can add services for existing customers, win new customers and — as a result — boost revenue by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

## What to Offer

An effective MDM solution addresses three primary requirements:

- security
- management
- reporting

**Security** covers the ability to lock and wipe data from lost or stolen devices, as well as the implementation of policies for passwords, content restrictions, email, WiFi and VPN settings, and what applications to deploy.

**Management** addresses which mobile strategy to pursue — BYOD or COPE — and includes the provisioning, monitoring and decommissioning of devices, and predefined processes for adding users and devices. Administrators need the ability to decide how much control to grant users over business data and applications, what data to monitor, and to set thresholds to trigger alerts when necessary.

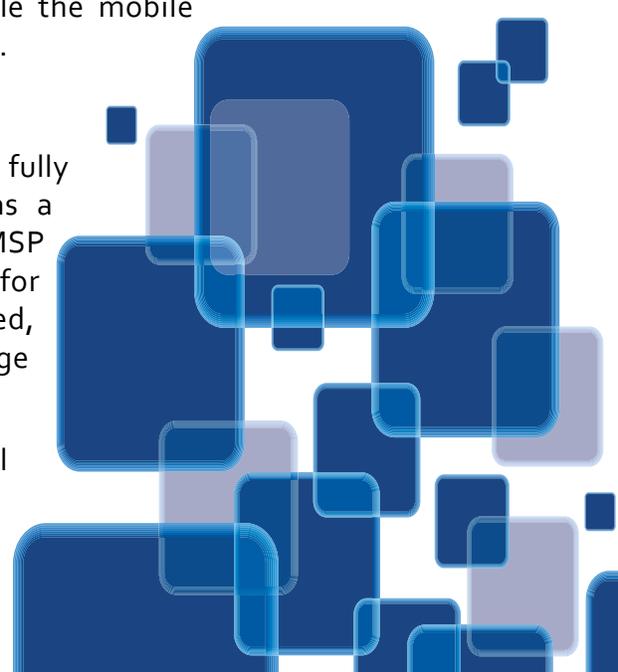
**Reporting** is fundamental to a successful MDM implementation, as is the case with managed services in general. Documenting the MSP's work gives the customer perspective on performance and ROI. Itemized reports that specify troubleshooting events and prevention of security threats deliver proof of effectiveness.

As an extension of the remote services MSPs already provide, MDM reinforces the provider's value while addressing what is an increasingly acute need for the customer. Offering the service while competitors are still trying to figure out how to tackle the mobile challenge is sure to strengthen the provider/client relationship.

## N-able Mobile Manager

N-able Technologies offers MDM as an a-la-carte offering fully integrated with its N-central RMM platform. N-central has a proven track record of effectiveness and flexibility, offering MSP partners multiple options through its a-la-carte service options for SMB customers. N-able's Mobile Manager features centralized, single-pane-of-glass management for MSPs to track and manage mobile devices that access their customers' networks.

Centralized management through the main N-central dashboard simplifies the work of technicians while helping to keep operational costs down. Through Mobile Manager,





MSPs deliver the most important of functions involved in MDM — protecting IT assets by tracking, locking and wiping devices that are lost, stolen or belong to a terminated employee. This helps prevent security leaks and network breaches. With Mobile Manager, MSPs can set and enforce policies that dictate the behavior of mobile devices, giving employers a level of control they cannot achieve without MDM.

N-able's MDM offering includes the following:

- remote monitoring and management
- device provisioning and decommissioning
- lock and wipe capabilities for lost and stolen devices
- C-level reports documenting mobile device activity

By leveraging N-able's Mobile Manager, MSPs stand to benefit in multiple ways, including:

- provide end-to-end managed services
- add value for SMB customers
- differentiate themselves from competitors
- leverage MDM as an entry point for overall managed services
- generate new revenue streams
- penetrate new markets

## Conclusion

More employees already use smartphones at work than laptops – 81 percent vs. 65 percent. Twenty-five percent use tablets for work, and the number is growing. These users are fueling the BYOD trend, forcing employers to address attendant security and management implications. For MSPs, this is an exceptional opportunity to add value and revenue. By leveraging N-able's approach of integrating MDM with RMM, MSPs stand to strengthen customer relationships and boost business longevity.



# N-able

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