Mobile Office For a Small Business

Is it time to consider your business’s need for a “storefront” office or home base? Does your business depend on people walking in the door? Do you and your people need as big a space to “hang your hat”?  

In many cases a mobile office will improve employee productivity and company profitability by helping you run your business anytime, anywhere. Going mobile is no longer a luxury but a requirement. Mobile computing can be affordable, convenient, secure and reliable. Mobile workforce needs vary from industry to industry and job to job. Most mobile employees are not confined to four walls and a desk—they are on the go, serving clients whenever and wherever opportunities surface.  

No matter the role mobility plays in your business, there’s one thing every mobile office can enable: access to critical business information 24/7. Research estimates that more than 50 million U.S. workers are considered mobile because they spend more than 20 percent of their time away from their primary workspace.  

If you or your employees are mobile, consider the efficiencies that are at stake. The return on investment (ROI) of going mobile is much more than just a monetary return. You gain value and efficiency in your organization. You may even see improvements in employee satisfaction and retention that are created by the flexibility mobile technologies can provide.  

Small business CEOs report that ROI potential are usually found in the following areas:

- Increased revenues and decreased costs: employees make smart decisions and process requests faster, allowing them extra time to create more business opportunities. Reduce workflow volumes and streamline your business processes.
- Faster staff responsiveness and improved employee productivity: manage your business at any time from anywhere. Keep your employees connected with technologies such as broadband and Wi-Fi, whether they are traveling or at home with a sick child.
- Improved service: customers demand and expect instant service and immediate access to information; if you cannot respond to their needs immediately, they will find a company that can.
The major consideration for any small business is to do some careful planning for a mobile workforce. I suggest the following general considerations:

- Determine the right mobile strategy for your organization and needs for your workforce. For example:
  - Where do you typically work when out of the office?
  - Do you need quick access to the Internet for information?
  - Do you need to access documents; do you need access to a shared calendar, contact information, voicemail or other office functions?

- Determine your organizational readiness to support mobile workers. Consider these issues:
  - Have you already identified specific jobs for mobile work?
  - Do you (or your IT resource) know which products will best suit your mobility?
  - If you need additional products to support mobility, do you have a budget in place to add the technology? It is critical for you to plan for the timeframe and cost associated with going mobile.

- Create a mobile strategy. When creating your strategy, engage the people who will ultimately be using the solution and ensure you have a solid understanding of their needs. Make sure your strategy enables employees to access the information you identified in your planning. Even though a product or service may be trendy, it may not provide the access your workers need to be productive while they are away from their offices.

Going mobile is affordable, convenient, secure, productive and reliable. Your mobile workforce can improve your bottom line by decreasing your costs, improving efficiency and providing your employees with the resources they need to provide excellent customer service.

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