

Mobilizing Your Workforce for Success



Want to know what a mobile workforce (MW) looks like?

Here's one example: 500 employees spread out over eight countries. They work where they want and when they want and use unified communication and collaboration (UCC) tools to “interact” and conduct project meetings. The employees rarely meet physically—perhaps twice a year for groupwide meetings. This description of a mobile workforce is not unusual, nor is it unique.

Almost half of the participants in a survey commissioned by Cisco said an “increase in workforce mobility” was a key driver for investing in technology.¹

Indeed, more companies are investing in a mobile workforce² for good reasons:



- More are working remotely and spending more time working. Flexi-scheduling and work-from-home opportunities impact a worker's decision to take or leave a job.³
- Companies that invest early in empowering a mobile workforce experience productivity gains and increases in creativity and loyalty.⁴
- Small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) can enjoy big cost savings with a Connected Workplace strategy.⁵
- A mobile workforce is a happy workforce that feels more valued.⁶

Good reasons aside, SMB owners who are serious about attracting and retaining talent cannot avoid having an MW, due to the “structured but flexible work” demands of a technologically savvy Millennial workforce⁷ and an aging population that is working longer and from home.⁸

The question is not why but how an SMB workforce can be mobile: how an SMB can invest in suitable, secure, and scalable mobile workforce architecture (MWA).

Today, the “how” is made easier, thanks to faster broadband speeds, increasing smart-device usage, and better global wireless connectivity. Yet unless you have deep pockets to afford an in-house IT team, setting up and maintaining a mobile workforce is best achieved with an expert third-party vendor’s help.

Here are five pointers for you to start the conversation with your vendor:

1

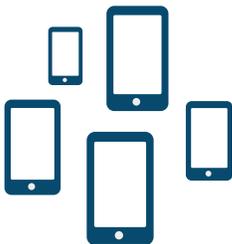
Communication and collaboration tools



These tools connect your mobile employees globally and empower them to better communicate and collaborate across time zones. They give your workers valuable “face time” with remote colleagues and drive teamwork. Internal digital forums also encourage idea generation and content sharing among employees. No two SMBs have the same mobile workforce requirements, and you need to balance communication needs against budget constraints when you weigh your vendor’s recommendation.

2

A suitable bring-your-own-device (BYOD) strategy



Your SMB needs a BYOD policy now, to cater to this growing trend. Besides providing your employees with more MW flexibility, a good BYOD policy means your workers can get more work done, even when they are outside the office.

2.5
million

organizations will
have a BYOD
policy by 2018.⁹

3.6
devices

will be owned
by each person,
globally, by 2018.¹⁰

Over
50%

of employees
expect to use
company devices
for work and play.¹¹

A good BYOD policy will include:

- Having access points (APs) to give your workers a reliable and seamless connection to your company's wireless network
- Choosing a wireless LAN controller that can give your team and guest users an optimal connection internally and externally
- Implementing a dynamic policy control that allows your SMB the agility to grant users access to your wireless network
- Giving your staff remote access while protecting your SMB's data with a highly secure mobility framework

3

Data protection versus ease of access



Data protection technology has increased in sophistication, but so has malware technology. A sound BYOD strategy requires a fine balance between protection and ease of use and access.

Many SMBs use private cloud, big data, and desktop virtualization to improve operational efficiencies, while protecting sensitive, business-critical data. Deploying the right defense infrastructure is crucial in preventing deployment delays, service disruptions, and missed opportunities. This requires careful thinking and expert advice. It is best to work with an expert vendor such as a managed service provider (MSP) who has a strategic overview of all best-of-breed solutions available in the market.

4

Security against ransomware and other attacks



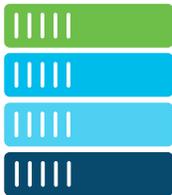
Some organizations fail to realize that the individual employee can be the organization's weakest link.

The May 2017 WannaCry attack hit over 200,000 individuals by the third day, not just companies.¹²

Enabling greater mobility without any proper security controls to protect corporate assets on employee-owned devices is asking for trouble.

5

Server/network that supports traffic



Lastly, to support the needs of a mobile workforce, with countless connections made by countless user devices throughout the day, your SMB needs a server/network that is agile to cater to usage peaks and troughs, to ensure that communication remains seamless and applications can be deployed quickly.



The design and execution of a mobile workforce strategy is critical to the business success of an SMB in today's increasingly mobile and connected world. Ask us how you can do it right with Cisco Start.

Article Sources

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