

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS GUIDE



CONNECT STAFF WITH MOBILE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

Mobile workforce solutions improve customer experience, increase productivity, connect employees and managers, and much more. These tools vary in their capabilities, but there are technologies retailers should start with when implementing mobile workforce solutions, such as providing a reliable WiFi infrastructure. Additionally, it's important to consider what devices you will use and how to properly train staff to use workforce management tools. There are many benefits to adopting a bring-your-own-device strategy, one being the ability to have employees use devices that they are already familiar with, but security must be considered. Retailers should also look to implement technologies that are flexible and work on any device, such as iPhones, iPads, Android and web applications. Navigating the mobile workforce landscape requires research, but the benefits can be immense. Providing managers and employees quick access to real-time information cuts down on administrative issues and frees employees up to work with customers anywhere in the store.

Q What technologies or capabilities should retailers start with when considering implementing mobile workforce solutions?

ALEX SEWELL: The first thing retailers should consider when implementing mobile workforce solutions is providing a reliable WiFi infrastructure. Robust network connectivity — the backbone to any wireless network — is key when working in an en-



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WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

“MANY RETAILERS ARE FINDING THAT MOBILE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS NOT ONLY INCREASE EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY, BUT ALSO HELP MANAGERS MORE EFFECTIVELY DIRECT AND ORGANIZE THEIR TEAMS.”

— ALEX SEWELL, VICE PRESIDENT, MID-MARKET & ENTERPRISE MARKETING, COMCAST BUSINESS

environment where mobile applications are tasked with transferring large amounts of information from secure corporate servers to employee mobile devices, and back.

In addition, security must remain top of mind. In light of the recent security breaches within many of the larger retail brands, retailers should consider solutions that provide a secure, encrypted network for business use, and a separate public hotspot for customers. Also, by separating the WiFi access, the speed of the private network won't be impacted by surges in customer use of the public network, and vice versa.

SCOTT KNAUL: The most obvious technology a retailer should look for is one that can be used on multiple devices such as iPhones, iPads, Android and web applications. The technology should be something that is simple and easily trained and understood by all associates. It should be easy to configure and maintain, you don't want to select a solution or application that requires heavy configuration or support from a central IT department.

Bottom line, it should be highly intuitive for your employees and easy for your IT team to maintain and support.

One thing to consider when evaluating solutions is how can your process be supported with the fewest amount of “clicks” by the user. The simpler it is to use the faster it will be adopted and the faster the retailer will realize the benefits of the application.

Q What top benefits are retailers enjoying thanks to mobile workforce solutions?

KNAUL: There are a number of benefits to providing mobile solutions, but ultimately I believe it comes down to the empowerment and engagement of the retail associate. Through employee self-service on a mobile device, retail associates have the ability to own their time at work. They can choose their schedules, manage their work profiles, gain insight into their progress and development at work and ultimately own their satisfaction with their job.

Another benefit includes providing real-time communication with everyone in the organization. At this point everyone is familiar with how to use mobile applications. This gives retail employers the ability to reach out directly to their associates to communicate priorities, assignments and updates on progress. One benefit that can often get over-

looked is the ability to capture feedback from your associates and managers. Retailers recognize how effective mobile applications are in terms of listening to their customers but it's a great way to get feedback from the people on the front lines as well.

SEWELL: Many retailers are finding that mobile workforce solutions not only increase employee productivity, but also help managers more effectively direct and organize their teams. Solutions like cloud-based scheduling, accessible from anywhere, allow managers to redirect staff to other tasks and fill gaps in staff coverage quickly, whether they are onsite or working remote.

Mobile devices also untether staff from specific locations in the store, allowing them to assist customers, perform inventory lookups, and perform price comparisons from anywhere in the store. This improves customer service.

Cloud-based reporting tools allow upper management and headquarters locations a view of real-time store performance and sales activities to offer support. Mobile solutions also enable managers to be more effective at performance management and identifying training and development opportunities. Cloud-based human resources systems help managers track metrics like the length of time it takes to complete a task, time clock entry, payroll, and even an employee's progress towards taking required compliance trainings to guide coaching and development conversations.

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Q How can a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) strategy streamline operations and support workforce productivity?

SEWELL: There are many benefits to a store choosing to adopt a BYOD strategy, one being the ability to have employees use devices that they are already familiar with, significantly streamlining training and ramp time. By eliminating the need for employees to carry company-issued devices, retailers can also save money on device procurement and distribution, which can be significant if there is high-employee turnover.

Mobile devices equip employees with access to information that enables them to service guests more quickly with accurate updates on delivery times, backroom inventory, pricing and promotions. Access to this information can help provide a better experience for guests and empower employees to be more service focused.

BYOD policies can also boost productivity by incorporating functions like employee scheduling into devices, allowing employees and store leadership to manage their schedules remotely. Some retailers have even extended functions like customer ordering, allowing employees to place orders on behalf of customers right on the spot.

KNAUL: Simply put organizations spend millions of dollars on hardware to support in-store process and capabilities. With associates having their own devices, companies

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can save significant dollars by having their process supported by the devices that their people already own. Obviously there needs to be a concerted effort to manage security and abide by regulations, but the companies that have figured this out are able to realize the benefits quickly.

One thing worth mentioning, the average person upgrades their devices much more quickly than the average retail organization can upgrade all of their devices. This keeps technology in a much more cutting-edge state.

Q What advice can you offer to retailers on managing mobile devices and training staff to use the new technology?

KNAUL: Keep things simple. Focus on the main objectives and don't make the application too complicated. Think about the number of applications that are available for mobile devices in our everyday world. The best ones are easy to use, easy to understand and don't require a lot of training. Follow this

pattern for success with your mobile WFM application. Make the solution something people will want to use because it improves their quality of life. The inclination will be to publish detailed training documents for supporting the application, avoid this. The best mobile applications should be able to be self-taught in a matter of minutes as long as the workflow is intuitive.

Introducing mobile WFM applications is about giving your people what they want and what they need to be happy in their job. If they can pick their own schedules you will reduce the number of call-outs, reduce turnover and have a much more engaged staff in stores that delivers better results.

SEWELL: Mobile device training is a critical element of any mobile device strategy, as it ensures staff, management and IT are all aligned. Whether a retailer implements a BYOD strategy or issues company devices, policies and procedures must be documented and communicated. The policy must address acceptable usage, data ownership, how to access company-owned resources, “do's and don'ts” and most importantly, security.

Specifically with BYOD, the policy should also cover what devices are permitted, boundaries for IT support and clear rules for who owns what apps and data.

Training can oftentimes be streamlined when teaching employees how to operate company apps on their own devices. However, if issuing company devices, retailers should invest in detailed training to ensure all staff knows how to use the company devices. **RIS**

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COMPANY NAME/ WEBSITE	RELEVANT PRODUCT/SOLUTION	KEY CLIENTS
AccuStore www.accustore.com	Mobile Site Execution Management Technology and Site Profiling Services	Circle K, Kroger, Giant Eagle
Ceridian www.ceridian.com	Dayforce HCM	Aeropostale, Foodtown, Guitar Center
Comcast Business business.comcast.com SEE AD ON PAGE 19	Ethernet, Voice, Internet, TV and Managed Services	N/A
Infinite Peripherals https://ipcmobile.com/	Linea Pro 5	United Airlines, Urban Outfitters
JDA Software jda.com	JDA Workforce Management	Culver's, HEMA, Praxis
Kronos Incorporated www.kronos.com/retail	Kronos Workforce Mobile	The Container Store
Logile, Inc. www.logile.com	Employee Self-Service, Task Execution and Communication Management, Food Safety Compliance Management	Big Y Markets, Price Chopper (Golub Corporation), The Vitamin Shoppe
Natural Insight www.naturalinsight.com	Natural Insight offers fully integrated mobile and web-based staff scheduling, timekeeping, task management, field communications and analytics	N/A
Opterus Inc. www.opterus.com	Store Ops-Center	Bob's Stores, Charming Charlie, Pet Supplies Plus
Profitect www.profitect.com	Prescriptive Analytics	Ahold USA, Sally Beauty, Tops Markets
Reflexis Systems, Inc. http://www.reflexisinc.com	Workforce Management, Reflexis Time & Attendance, Reflexis Employee Self Service	CVS Health, Dollar General, AutoZone
StoreForce www.storeforcesolutions.com	Performance Based Scheduling	Columbia Sportswear, LUSH Cosmetics, Vans
Verisae www.verisae.com	vx Field	GPM, Kroger, Tesco