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TOP 10 APPS IN THE ENTERPRISE

PRODUCED BY
MOBILE
ENTERPRISE

By Lori Castle

Looking back on the 2011 Mobile Enterprise “Top Ten Apps in the Enterprise” report—defined then as “internal enterprise applications mobilized”—91% of survey respondents cited email/calendar/contacts as mobilized.

This put it at the top of the list then, followed by Intranet access (65%) and field service (dispatch, work orders, etc.) at 42%. CRM and BI rounded out the top five at 41% each then. The survey was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2011.

In the early fourth quarter 2014, we again went out to our audience with comparable questions, anticipating, at least, a few notable differences. This is apparent in a few instances, but dramatic in only one, and, ironically, there was significance in the similarities.

The current data still shows email/calendar/contacts as No. 1, with the exact same percentage of respondents answering accordingly. Intranet remained at No. 2, with a slight jump to 68%, and field mobilization was only up by 2%.

The State Remains the Same

Flat mobility would not surprise 451 analyst Chris Marsh, who said on the Mobile Enterprise Mobility Outlook 2015 web seminar: “The workforce is no more mobile than three years ago.” This claim indeed rings true in comparing the top three apps from 2012 to where they sit today.

It’s also in line with what Ojas Rege, VP of Strategy at MobileIron, calls “baseline productivity apps” such as email and intranet, which are, at this state, not surprisingly on top, he says, adding, “But these aren’t the transformative apps, which vary widely across organization.”

For many companies, the complexity brought on by BYOD, and all the issues therein, meant that simply securing access for employees on the multitude of preferred devices was a challenge that needed to be met before transformation could be considered.

That’s changing; but while solutions have come a long way in the last year, as standalone MDM and monolithic MEAPs evolve to MAM and EMM, there is still no change in the number of operating systems that companies will support over the next year. (See Figure 1.) All four—iOS, Android, BlackBerry and Windows—will be in the mix.

BlackBerry will see the most significant move downward as 85% of companies who

Top 10 Apps in the Enterprise

1. Email/Calendar/Contacts
2. Intranet Access
3. Content Sharing/Collaboration
4. CRM
5. Business Intelligence
6. ERP
7. Video Conferencing
8. Travel and Expense
9. Field Service
(i.e. Dispatch, Work Order, Routing, Workflow)
10. Tools for B2B Partners/Customers

supported the once dominant enterprise system lessen to 64%. iOS stays flat, and the intention to expand the ecosystem to include more Android and Windows devices puts them neck and neck.

Build and Buy

According to Rege, a majority of his customer base is mobilizing apps and that number is increasing year over year. "This indicates that mobile apps are becoming the preferred method for getting work done. However, many organizations are still in the early stages of experimenting with apps, generally around deploying third-party apps for employee productivity," he explains.

In fact, our survey shows that in 2014 the preferred method of deploying apps was

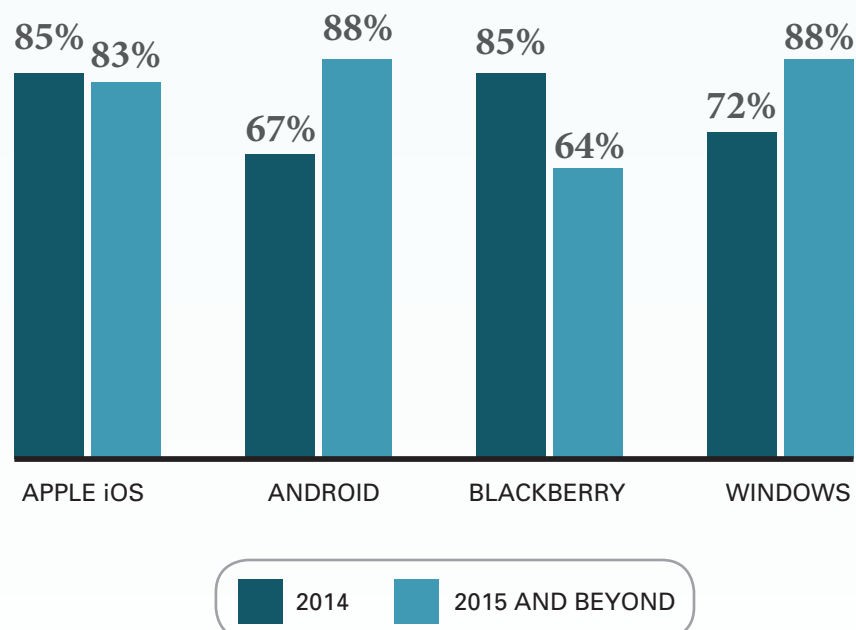
"out of the box from a solution provider." Looking ahead to 2015, 47% of companies will use current resources/skills to build apps in house via a third-party platform. (See Figure 2.) Another 22% will add resources to do this, while 28% say they will go it alone with internal resources and proprietary tools.

Keep It Simple

The latter are not likely to be those moving into the next phase of enterprise apps which will be aimed at productivity, be simpler in order to address a specific need and are "extremely valuable," according to Steve Drake, VP Business Development for FeedHenry. Increasingly, he believes, it is not about a huge application, but a fail fast scenario, where apps get to the user

FIGURE 1

WHICH MOBILE OPERATING SYSTEMS DOES YOUR COMPANY PLAN TO SUPPORT NOW? WHICH WILL YOU SUPPORT IN 2015 AND BEYOND? (Multiple Answers Allowed)



quickly and the process is iterative, based on user feedback for tweaking, updating and fixing.

This way, apps can be built in a matter of weeks—even days, not months or years as in the past. He also notes that a modern, agile platform is needed to do this.

Essentially, at some point, there may be an app for every process rather than every process being built into one app. Think about the way consumer apps are utilized. Look on any person's device,

they have loads of different apps for what they do in daily life—shop, bank, connect, communicate, work, etc.

Moving to a model where there are multiple apps for doing one job means that the app can be more nimble—with a single purpose it can react better and be more easily updated. To filter down, for example, 20 applications to one app, you might as well be using your desktop, says Drake.

“On our desktop it's fine to have 10 to 15 applications running because that works well on a fast network. Whereas offline, with potentially lower speeds and less processing power, you are going to want a nimble app, for a single purpose,” he explains.

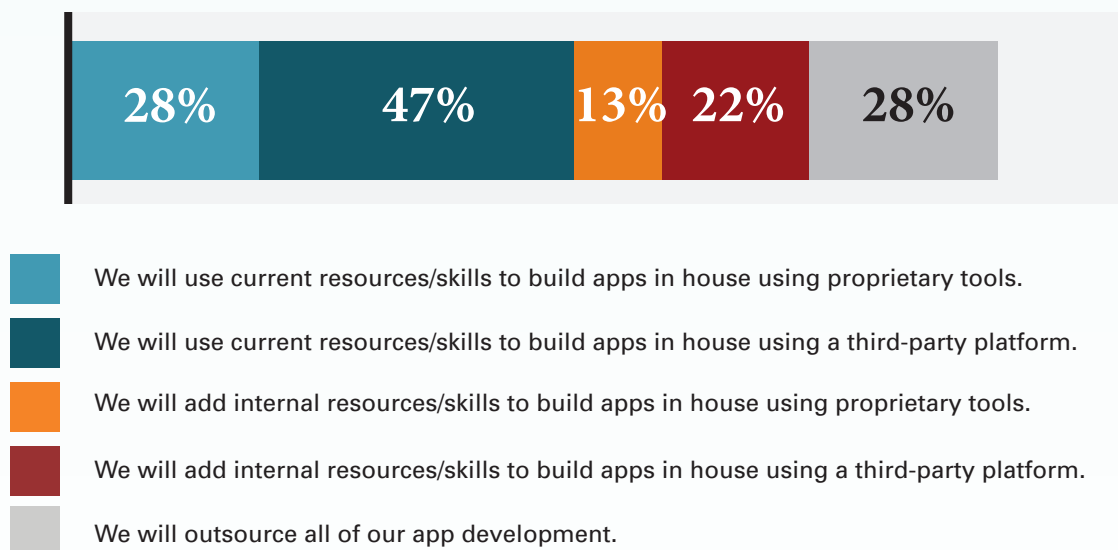
Simplicity must also be considered because of screen size. Co-Founder and CMO at

52%

of companies say they have mobilized content sharing/collaboration

FIGURE 2

WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR 2015 APP DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (MULTIPLE ANSWERS ALLOWED)



At some point, there may be an app for every process rather than every process being built into one app.

AnyPresence, Rich Mendis says, “One of the key aspects of mobility is that you have a smaller screen; you are not spending as much time on an app as you would on a desktop, so you should provide the most pertinent, succinct data as possible to the user and allow them to interact with that app with the least amount of taps. It’s a subtlety, but the interaction model on mobile is different than on a desktop.”

Indeed, in the Mobile Enterprise report, “Mobile Productivity in the Enterprise,” 451 Analyst Chris Hazelton wrote, “As apps improve, the threshold for doing work on a mobile device will be lowered. The key is to ensure that enterprise mobile apps are simple and focused—getting users to the appropriate data and activities that allow them to be quickly productive while mobile.”

It’s consumerization of IT all over again, and the more modern approach to development, says Drake, is listening to end user employees and end customers to get them involved early and understand their needs. “The consumer devices pushed their way into the enterprise space and encouraged many new use cases. The problem was, on the personal side, with consumer apps, the mobile device was highly functional. At work it became a brick because apps were extremely complicated and nothing like what employees were used to. So, now we are taking that consumer view, but having an enterprise-oriented plan.”

Rege adds to this, “You aren’t building enterprise apps for mobile. That is the number one mindset failure. You are building consumer apps for employees.”

Making Progress?

As we look at the rest of the list, BI and CRM, both were at 41% mobilized in 2011, coming in at No. four and five. For 2014, the rankings are the same but the percentages of companies that mobilized these platforms grew by 10%.

ERP makes it in at No. 6 (47%) suggesting that there may be more progress in mobilizing the infrastructure than companies are getting credit for. In the 2011 survey, 27% had mobilized and 20% of respondents indicated they would be mobilizing ERP in 2012.

The most surprising entry to the 2014 list is at No. 4—content sharing/collaboration, with 52% of respondents saying they have mobilized this in their enterprise. This tool did not even rate in the 2011 survey, but the current data seems to, on one hand, make sense, since ERP, BI and CRM have grown to a point where content sharing/collaboration can now be better enabled.

On the other hand, content sharing/collaboration is an area of mobility consistently cited as lacking tools by employees and one where they turn to consumer-grade apps the most to address the perceived lack. It’s hard to ascertain exactly why a gap exists, if, as the survey reflects, the majority of companies have deployed these type of apps.

But it’s likely because enterprises think they are providing the right tools and employees are simply not using them—either because they don’t know about them or don’t think they do the job as well as the apps of their choices.

In any case, the ability to truly work on, share and collaborate with content via mobile devices, which have typically been mainly for consumption, will be the key to fully realizing mobile transformation.

Hazelton also noted in his report, “It will be the next generation of EMM tools, mobile app development strategies, collaboration tools and the mobile apps themselves that will help organizations realize productivity goals from mobile.”

Only
2%

predict their enterprise apps will run on smartwatches in 2015

Rege says, “Enterprise mobile apps are no longer a side-project but instead a key way for employees to do their work. However, it is only now that most enterprises truly view mobile as transformative versus an incremental improvement in productivity.”

7-10

The rest of the list shows both stagnancy and progress as the insignificant growth in the field indicates (No. 9) a standstill there, whereas No. 7—video conferencing—can be put in the category of collaboration and therefore be seen as progress.

Mobilizing processes like T&E (No. 8) were never a priority, but a next step in productivity apps is, as mentioned, less complex. Mendis explains, “We are starting to see, in HR for example, apps for approval. This was once a nice-to-have, but it’s rapidly becoming a must

have. If you don’t have common apps for things like workflow approval, you will be behind the times.”

New Use Cases, New Devices

The No. 10 spot shows wider thinking—B2B Partner/Customer apps—where enterprises are starting to extend capabilities externally for greater competitive advantage.

And, if we wonder now what the list might look like in another three years, Drake suggests focusing on the bigger picture. “It’s about having a strategic platform for mobility that allows you to get to that mobile-first place where everything you deploy is mobile or will have a mobile component and can be rolled out to any device that is out there.”

Companies should also already be thinking about how they can leverage some of the same backend integrations and delivery of solutions and information to the Internet of Things (IoT). Mendis says, “We are in the cusp of something much more with the IoT where the number of devices that you can run apps on will explode. There will be apps in your car, on your appliances, on your wrist etc. IT infrastructure must be built to support, not just the current mobile and tablet world, but what’s next.”

Alas, our survey shows that companies are not yet thinking about emerging platforms. When asked which form factors their apps will run on in 2015 and beyond, only 2% responded smart watches; 1% Google Glass; and another 1%, other enterprise wearables.

In the end, no matter which device, OS or even who the user is, Rege says, “The question to ask is: ‘What drives competitive advantage for my business?’ That will be the next transformative mobile app for you.”