

Taming the mobile tiger

Grow resource effectiveness, not management overhead

September 2010

The expectations, working methods and tools used by employees in all organisations have changed as a result of advances in communications technologies. Mobile technology has had the greatest impact; while the mobile phone initially seemed like a simple extension of the familiar desk phone system, the evolution of mobile networks from mainly carrying voice traffic to predominantly carrying data, has created a more sophisticated and complex challenge for those responsible for managing fleets of mobile users.

Although mobile devices can be purchased as office equipment without reference to IT departments, and little consideration to their ongoing use and appropriate tariffs, the fact that many are now smartphones, PDAs or dongles to connect tablets, notebooks or laptops, introduces a wide range of IT issues around control, management and security. In combination with the requirements for managing connectivity, these issues place an increasing burden on already stretched IT departments.

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Recommendations for mobile fleet efficiency

Drop the denial: Most companies either do not believe they have a problem with their mobile fleet, or believe the problem is too small to bother addressing, but these views are often not based on the full facts. Pressures on expenditure will continue to increase and it is far better to understand the size and shape of the problem, before trying to make any changes.

Identify the stakeholders: Often many people are involved in different aspects of mobile, from procurement to invoicing. In different geographies there may be local responsibility, but it will still often fall to multiple groups or job roles. All those involved in the processes need to be considered, from finance and HR to IT and facilities management, to ensure that existing practices are understood, so that when recommendations for change are made, all will be in alignment and agreement.

Set out a solid foundation: There has to be a good reason why so much investment is being ploughed into mobile, but the reason will vary from organisation to organisation. This requires a mobile strategy which should identify the reasons and objectives. This then leads on to what sort of policies will be required in support of those objectives.

Treat mobile policies as living entities: It is not sufficient to define a set of mobile policies and assume that everything will be ok on-going. Policies need regular review against changes in business processes, the competitive landscape, technology advances and security threats. Policies also need to be set with due consultation and the commitment of users, and then they need to be actively managed and enforced where possible with suitable reporting to demonstrate compliance.

Take asset management seriously: Mobile assets create more challenges due to their very nature. They are small, used out of the office and rely on the user for much of their protection. The tangible assets, in particular the growing numbers of smartphones, contain further business assets – software and data – that are also exposed to greater risk. The cost of competitive leaks, reputational damage and legislative action from the loss, theft or exposure of data far outweighs the cost of replacing the device hardware involved.

Face up to personal preferences and usage: All organisations have to recognise that many employees, as consumers, have access to powerful communications technology—mobile phones, broadband internet, social networks—often better than they get at work. It is naive to expect employees to resist these personal connections during their working day, so policies have to apply appropriate rules and controls to ensure security and productivity without alienating individuals or discouraging emerging collaborative working practices.

Take control of costs and billing: With a complex array of mobile products and services, along with historically poor clarity of billing, many mistakes have been made. Companies pay for services they no longer or have never used; managers or even employees sign up to products and services with little central control or awareness. Whether it is personal or business use, cost centre managers and employees need to be aware of cost and consequences, and the business needs to have the level of detail needed to make informed decisions.

Evaluate incremental outsourcing: All organisations should consider their core competencies and what might be better pushed out to be a service delivered from over the internet or a mobile network. As a first step, see what incremental services are offered by existing carriers, as a number are exploring and already offering ways to add value to the connectivity they offer. If there is little differentiation in running these services in-house, use incremental outsourcing to free up internal resources for other tasks.

Find partners that fit: Some managed service providers will offer to do everything, or at least try to. It is far better to take a fine-grained approach by identifying a self contained set of needs, such as those relating to mobile resource management, and find a partner that offers that. Look to those who will provide a complete package of related services, but remain within the bounds of their skillset and capabilities.

Taming the mobile tiger

Although mobile devices can be purchased as office equipment without reference to IT departments, and little consideration to their ongoing use and appropriate tariffs, the fact that many are now smartphones, PDAs or dongles to connect tablets, notebooks or laptops, introduces a wide range of IT issues around control, management and security. In combination with the requirements for managing connectivity, these issues place an increasing burden on already stretched IT departments.

- **Mobile devices are much more than just phones and the diversity of users has significantly increased**
The benefits gained from mobile productivity and responsiveness risk being undermined by the costs of managing and supporting greater numbers of users, making ever more use of more sophisticated mobile devices and services. Many handsets are now portable computers, but with users with all sorts of roles, fewer are going to be tech savvy, and will be more likely to need more support, and extra controls on the way devices are used may need to be put in place.
- **Most mobile deployments have been ad hoc rather than strategically planned**
The ease and relatively low upfront costs have made mobile deployments seem simple, but the transition from simple phone to smart IT communications device and explosive growth in use means that organisations need to set down mobile priorities, plans and policies – in short, have a strategy.
- **The right policies can bring mobile use under control, but they need to be enforced**
Policies help bring order and consistency to the burgeoning numbers of mobile users across an organisation, and help those tasked with mobile management keep control of assets and budgets, but only if the policies are properly managed.
- **Mobile assets are hard to manage and encompass more than just hardware**
Some businesses struggle to effectively manage relatively fixed technology assets, such as desktop computers, but mobile devices introduce much more complexity, some of which requires specialist understanding. As well as the handsets themselves, there are contracts with often complex tariff options and soft mobile assets such as applications and data either on or accessed by the devices while mobile. These bring new and fast changing demands on the asset management processes.
- **Internal resources are tight and should be used where most effective for the business**
It is not just about having time and money, even though these are in increasingly short supply, but also having the right combination of skill sets and sufficient knowledge. Many of the skills required are specialised, and providing suitably trained in-house resources is costly, especially when people can better be deployed adding value and directly supporting the business elsewhere.
- **Companies have seen the mobile resource management opportunity, but not all have the right attributes**
While many of the aspects of managing mobile resources relate to best practices for managing business processes in general, there are a number of areas, such as billing, device and network identification and control, which require more detailed telecoms knowledge. This may be present in more specialised companies with the right background and close relationships with providers, but should also be something a carrier could offer, providing they can pull together the services required into a compelling package.

Conclusion

The operational processes that closely involve overseeing mobile device use – asset management, mobile policy, contracts, security and connection issues – should be viewed as network services rather than in-house IT functions. With the requirement for specialist skills to accomplish many of these tasks, incremental outsourcing of them to a carrier makes a great deal of sense. Those considering this move need to check that their carrier has the capability to deliver these as managed services, and can scale the number of devices down as well as up to reflect moves, adds and changes in the workforce.

1. Introduction – what price mobile freedom?

There is no doubt the mobile phone has become a powerful and universal communications tool. Not only do most individuals have their own personal devices, but many organisations provide and pay for mobile phones for employees who need them for work. According to recent enterprise mobility research¹ around three quarters of mobile employees have their mobile bill paid for, or subsidised by, their employer. This is echoed to a lesser extent in public sector organisations, and even over two thirds of UK based small and medium sized businesses will provide and pay for mobiles for all or some of their employees, according to Quocirca research.

Mobile phones, laptops and other connected devices are becoming more prevalent as business tools for accessing email and other enterprise applications on the move. Although this started with executives, managers and IT staff, through devices such as the BlackBerry and Nokia Communicator, it is now broadening to encompass the wider workforce (Figure 1).

The drivers for this are often stated as boosting productivity, increasing responsiveness and speeding up decision making, which for those involved in repetitive tasks can be readily measured, but for many roles are soft and intangible. Increasingly environmental reasons are cited, especially in public sector organisations, from reducing travel, office space and carbon impact.

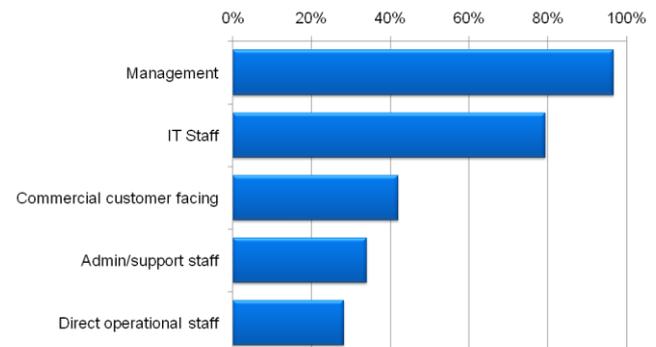
The scale of how much these benefits offer in each case may be up for debate, but the increase in employee mobility does create a number of significant challenges for businesses to overcome, to ensure the net effect of mobility is positive:

- **Cost management** – There are increasing and unpredictable costs from more and diverse types of mobile users each encompassing widely varying needs, skillsets and ambitions. Some will fully understand the impact of how they use their mobile devices, others will see them simply as tools, but all will need support and guidance. Increased data usage, from internet-savvy users now issued with more powerful mobile devices, is already causing large and sometimes unexpected bills. This often leads to productivity issues as well, which can be mitigated through internet access controls.
- **Asset management** – There is a multiplicity of ever smarter and more capable mobile devices available. Not only do the devices need management, but so too do the networks they access as well as the data and applications stored on the devices themselves, and device level security. Controlling who has what, when and how, is a significant challenge, especially with the range of products that will need to be supported. Not only is it rarely possible or practical to deploy a standard device and build to all employees, but many now prefer to 'self-choose' and expect their own consumer devices to be connected to the corporate networks.
- **Employee management** – Many of the risks and costs – security, device loss, over use – stem from employee attitudes and behaviour. Not all employees will take the right level of care over the devices entrusted them by the business, and even with those that do, mistakes can easily happen with small devices, even if it is simply a matter of leaving them in a taxi. Employees need to understand their responsibilities and be supported by suitable policies, processes and tools to protect both themselves and the corporate assets they carry or have access to while mobile. It is not simply the device itself which may have only a small monetary value, but also the data stored on it, which if sensitive and not correctly controlled can lead to data security and privacy breaches with significant fines from the UK Information Commissioner's Office.

The difficulty for most organisations is that managing mobility will require more time and effort and specialised resources which will need to scale to meet the needs of an increasingly mobile workforce. This is against an economic backdrop where companies, and in particular their ICT departments are being asked to do more with less. Companies need to plan how they will do this and need to set out their strategy for getting the best from mobile technology, while taming the costs, management overhead and security risks.

Figure 1

Which groups of employees have some form of mobile data device?²



2. Setting off in the right direction

Main findings:

- Those tasked with choosing and deploying mobile solutions for their organisation are under increasing pressure. Even in the large enterprises which should have a mobile strategy, many projects have been ad hoc purchasing decisions and not part of a strategic IT initiative. While times were good this was easier to justify, but now needs to be more organised.
- Mobile phones started out as simple out of the office alternatives to landlines; now they are sophisticated communications platforms. Such advances create a confusing myriad of options and choices so organisations need to set out an achievable set of mobile policies.

The approach taken by many organisations with their mobile deployments was initially ad hoc, driven by tactical needs and rarely as part of a well planned and executed strategy. This was apparent, even in large enterprises as recently as 2008 (Figure 2). Giving workers access to the tools they need to be responsive and serve customers while outside the office may well deliver advantage to the business, but at what cost?

While the devices started out as simply phones, often managed by a facilities or procurement manager, they have become sophisticated IT access devices, which need a range of complex IT support services to manage them – including security, device settings, billing and user management.

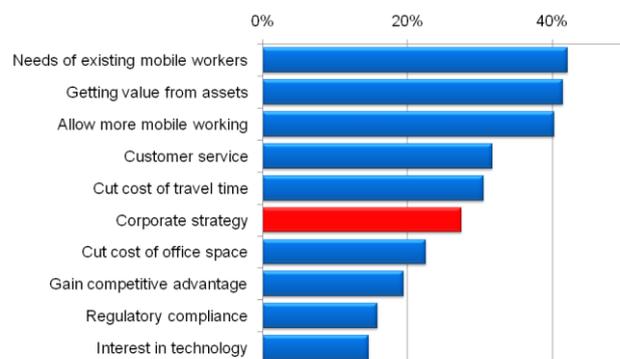
The burden for trying to bring this under control is generally falling on already overstretched IT departments, and with the continued appetite from business for even more flexible, mobile and remote working, the support challenge is only going to grow. So where should IT management start as it tries to get the problem under control?

Evaluate the present situation

The first step is to evaluate the current position regarding mobile deployments. Many businesses may think they know what current usage is, but a little investigation will probably unearth a number of issues, some of which may be serious. A full audit of contracts, devices and users will be necessary, and will probably find that some contracts are still being paid for former employees, some devices are being paid for but not used, and that some employees have the wrong functionality or tariff, when there are more deserving cases without mobile access.

The range of mobile devices and mobile operating systems available leads to many combinations, which some IT managers have tried to limit using 'standard issue' directives. This is becoming difficult to enforce as employees (as consumers as well as workers) have access to ever more sophisticated devices, and many are reluctant to have less powerful or usable devices as business supplied tools or carry multiple devices. They will also take more care of devices considered to be personal as well as business assets. It creates a challenge for those responsible for delivering IT and communications services in a controlled and secure way, when potentially vulnerable devices are connecting to corporate networks under the radar of IT management. However, simply trying to force an unwelcome standard is no longer an option either. The requirements and feelings of the user community need to be understood, as their level of acceptance will have a direct bearing on the value of mobile deployments.

Figure 2
What are the main drivers for extending mobile use?³



Set mobile strategy

It is important for any organisation to realise what it is trying to achieve through the use of mobile technology as a tool, and this comes from having a coherent top down strategic view. This does not need to be lengthy or set in stone, but must outline the direction and speed of travel so that individual mobile deployments are set in context. The range of objectives it should cover includes:

- **Primary mobile drivers** – any organisation needs to understand why it intends to pursue a mobile strategy. It might be for improved customer contact, better responsiveness, higher productivity, environmental reasons or to reduce the need for office space.
- **Alignment of mobile computing with existing IT** – existing strategies and policies for general IT must be taken into account. They may be there for security, compliance or good governance reasons, and these should not be undermined by a mobile strategy, indeed they should be extended to it.
- **Attitude to risk** – Organisations need to consider not only the loss or theft of data, especially as data protection or other legislative issues will arise, but also the impact on employee productivity if they are dependent on mobile tools. There may also be issues associated with the safety and security of staff themselves, such as the positive mobile benefits for lone worker protection, or the risk of theft from carrying an expensive and attractive handset.
- **Style of business** – Some organisations or their business processes have a natural fit with mobility. They have distributed offices, staff that perform a number of tasks at other locations and sufficient levels of employee trust to encourage home working. Others need to be based in certain premises – e.g. hospitals, campuses, manufacturing plants – to use particular facilities. They may not be tied to a desk, but their mobile needs will be different to those operating outside of the organisation's physical perimeter.
- **Balance of in-house versus outsourced** – what capabilities are there in-house, what would be better brought in from outside? Most organisations are trying to perform a primary task where technology is a supporting tool, so it is often far more effective to outsource non-core activities to specialists.

Define mobile policy

Underpinning the strategy are the policies which direct those who implement and use mobile technologies. Mobile policies should set out which are the critical mobile aspects to be managed and what are the guidelines for their management. These include those areas oriented around people, commercial interests – tariffs and contracts – as well as those associated with the technology and security. Organisations should assess the following policy areas:

- **Asset management** – ensuring that physical and soft mobile assets are secured and managed; monitoring the deployment and ownership of hardware; applying systems for the installation and maintenance of software; controlling access, movement and privacy of data i.e. preventing sensitive data from being copied to devices, ensuring storage media is encrypted and the wiping and disablement of lost/stolen devices.
- **On-going cost management** – identifying and selecting tariffs; providing adequate and suitable reporting; checking and validating billing; ensuring correct attribution of costs to individuals and cost centres.
- **Organisational management** – looking into how devices and services are allocated or selected by individual employees; dealing with policies for personal usage and human resources (HR) issues such as what is appropriate for a particular role; defining and delivering end user support.
- **Supplier management** – dealing with new orders, hardware returns, replacements and support issues; managing the commercial and operational issues with carriers such as billing or network problems and outages.

Each aspect is a complex area in its own right, requiring specific areas of expertise and the ability to deal with several internal departments and a range of external suppliers. Organisations should assess just how much they want or need to invest in building up internal expertise, and how much would be more cost effective to outsource.

Finally, mobile strategies and policies do not manage themselves, and there is a need for regular review, and for the effectiveness of policies to be monitored to ensure they are suitable and are being complied with. The overall mobile strategy should also be regularly checked and adapted to ensure the organisation keeps up with current business needs and technology developments, as well as remaining competitive with changes in their own industry sector.

3. Getting the most from precious resources

Main findings:

- Mobile asset management not only requires specific skills, but also takes time. When resources are tight, they are better deployed on tasks that differentiate and add value to the business, rather than routine, yet specialised, operational management.
- Just because people work with technology does not mean they are overly enamoured with it. Mobile technologies create more work, and for some that is all it is. With some external support they may view things differently. External service providers can put in the required investment, skills and resources and are well placed to help support mobile users.

The challenges of mobile asset control

Strategies and policies have become important because of the evolution of mobile technologies and their changing use. The mobile phone is no longer simply an out of the office phone used by a select few, but is now a sophisticated mobile IT and communications device capable of storing large amounts of data and being used to download and install new applications – over the air, by memory cards or synchronisation - if suitable controls are not in place.

The individuals now using mobile devices for business purposes are driven by differing motivations and agendas. They have been exposed to all sorts of gadgets as consumers and are unlikely to put up with cumbersome or difficult to use devices. They may even want to go further and choose something that fits lifestyle as well as working needs.

Whether through selecting their own or accepting a corporate issue device, there are many things a mobile user can do to introduce risks. This does not have to be related to viruses or other malware to cause problems for the safe or cost effective use of the device, they may simply use too much of the network tariff (e.g. watching football matches). Large volumes of data can be stored on, and offloaded from, mobile devices which also introduces data leakage risks as well as overloading the device and hampering or preventing its core business purpose. While some users are responsible and careful, others are not, and the aim of automating and enforcing mobile policies is to protect the organisation’s assets and ensure it can leverage the value in them.

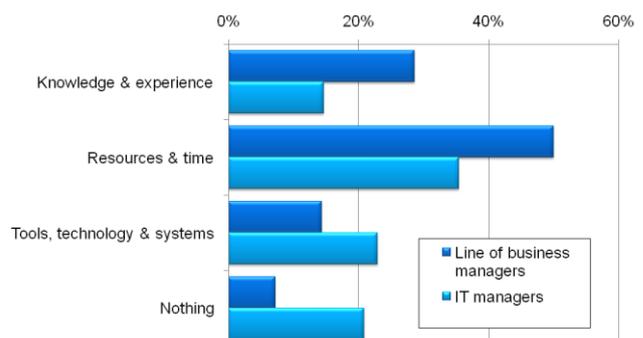
There are several interrelated asset groups that need to be managed and controlled to ensure an organisation can achieve the objectives set in its mobile strategy:

- Contracts/monthly costs
- Mobile hardware/devices
- Data stored on or transmitted to/from mobile devices
- Software/applications on mobile devices

Managing all of the assets associated with mobility has become a complex and challenging issue for many organisations. It requires some specialised skills, some detailed knowledge of telecoms systems (which is rarely present even in larger IT departments), and those most precious resources – time and money.

Line of business management are generally more aware of this issue than IT managers, as they realise that effective management of the technology supports the effective management of individuals (Figure 3). Often IT managers do not realise the extent of the problem.

Figure 3
What is lacking and preventing effective telecoms management?⁴



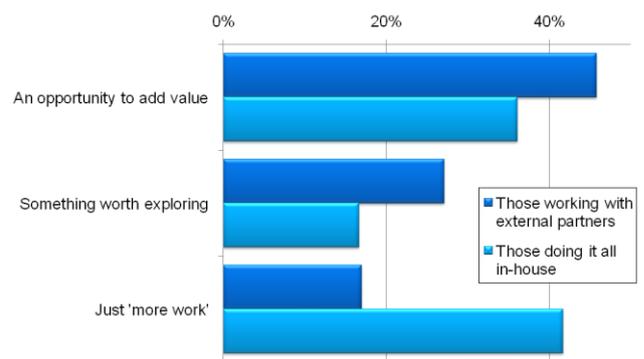
Free up internal resources

Recessions cause all organisations to identify cost reductions. The private sector is under increasing competitive pressures from globalisation and in the UK and other countries with massive budget deficits, the pressure on government departments and public sector bodies to reduce costs is immense. IT projects are particularly vulnerable and according to recent Quocirca research, many organisations believe the laying off of IT staff will increase. This makes it even more important to make existing staff more effective, and focused on adding value to the business.

Putting extra budget, time and effort into managing telecoms means that internal resources are most likely operating in a firefighting mode with hidden internal systems, and are not free to target applications that will really have a visible impact on the business. This can undermine the perception of the IT department elsewhere in the organisation.

Bringing in external help to run the day to day operational aspects of mobility will release employee time to focus on business improvement. While mobile technologies are often seen by some commentators as interesting and ‘sexy’, the reality is, that for many of those employed in IT departments, all new technologies just mean more work for them (Figure 4).

Figure 4
How is new technology viewed?⁵



Why look to outsourcing?

Putting the work associated with the management of mobile workers and assets out to a service provider has a number of benefits. Firstly it ensures that the right levels of skill and expertise are applied to the task; second it frees up internal resources to concentrate on adding business value, and finally it should be cheaper. Despite the fact that an outside party is being paid and making a profit from providing these services it should still be a way for an organisation to gain control of their mobile assets at a cost that would not be affordable in-house. This is due to:

- **Economies of scale** – managed service providers (MSPs) can leverage their service across multiple organisations, e.g. managing 1,000s of mobile devices across 10s of customers
- **Justification of specialist skills and tools** - MSPs can invest in developing in-depth skills that their customers cannot, and can invest in the tools to automate tasks that many end user organisations could not
- **Service levels** - MSPs can offer service level agreements that end user organisations will not get from their own IT staff – this is going to be attractive to business management worried about business continuity

Reducing costs is a major reason for outsourcing time consuming tasks such as managing mobile resources, but is not the only reason why organisations choose to work with MSPs (Figure 5). Good reputation, industry specific and technical knowledge are also important requirements. This means that mobile operators with their in-depth industry expertise and strong brands are well placed to deliver mobile management. The critical question that potential customers should ask is: does a given MSP provide the sufficient and complete breadth of mobile resource management services that are required?

Figure 5
What do successful organisations value most in external services partners?⁵



4. Conclusion – the mobile resourcing value proposition

The mobile phone is a ubiquitous tool, but unlike its landline cousin has become a very powerful multipurpose device. Keeping control of a fleet of such devices, with all of the variety of device types, operating systems, applications and users, is a significant management overhead. Despite the undoubted value that mobile working, in all its flavours, brings it is important not to undermine the benefits of improved productivity, responsiveness and workplace flexibility with excessive management costs.

"In only four months we have achieved things that we just couldn't have done internally. The [outsourced] service has allowed us to implement an upgrade of our entire fleet, plus given us better visibility of our mobile assets and billing. I still have a 100% accurate and up to date record of where everything is, who's using it and how much it's costing the company, which is fantastic. This allows us to make better decisions, saving King Sturge time and money while making my team's job much easier." **David Morris, Head of IT for King Sturge**

While many mid size and public sector organisations have been slow to set out formal mobile strategies, most are recognising the importance of taking control and the need to manage mobility, but they need to do it in a way that brings the benefits they require in challenging and uncertain economic times:

- **Costs** - save time and money to allow for budgets to be trimmed
- **Uncertainty** - reduce risk to gain control and peace of mind
- **Value add** - free resources and time

Often this will mean finding partners to outsource at least some mobile infrastructure management needs. Whereas at one time outsourcing implied putting the entire IT management or services out to an external organisation – losing control and disrupting employees – today outsourcing can be much more fine grained. Individual services can be delivered remotely over the internet or packaged up into relevant bundles.

Most companies will have existing direct relationships with both traditional fixed line and mobile carriers, and many regard these as important strategic relationships (Figure 6). Using these relationships to have services delivered to support mobile projects is fairly widespread, with fixed and mobile carriers ahead of other more generalised service providers.

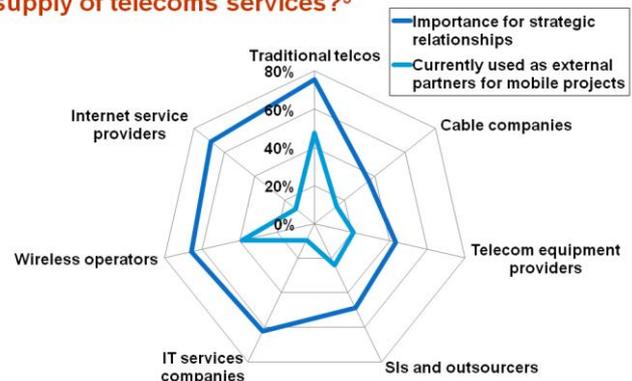
Given the existing relationship with their carriers, and the proximity of mobile operators to the issues surrounding the management of mobile resources, organisations should now consider how they can partner more closely with their mobile operator for the delivery of managed services to help tame the mobile tiger.

References:

- 1 – The iPass Mobile Workforce Report, August 2010
- 2 – Quocirca "Light touch, firm impression" report, April 2009
- 3 – Quocirca large enterprise European telecoms research, 2007 – 2008
- 4 – Quocirca "Total telecom expense management" report, April 2008
- 5 – Quocirca "Body shop to mind shop" report, May 2009

Figure 6

What types of companies are important for the supply of telecoms services?³





About Orange UK

Orange offers all businesses, from small start-ups to multi-national corporations, with communications services to meet their diverse needs. Orange provides high quality GSM coverage to 99% of the UK population, and 3G coverage to more than 93%. At the end of March 2010, Orange had more than 17.305 million customers in the UK - 16.442 million active mobile customers and approximately 863,000 fixed line internet customers.

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Further information on the services Orange offers to business customers can be found at www.orange.co.uk/business

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About Quocirca



REPORT NOTE:

This report has been written independently by Quocirca Ltd to consider the needs of mobile management.

The report draws on Quocirca's extensive knowledge of the technology and business arenas, and provides advice on the approach that organisations should take to be more effective in mobile management.

Quocirca would like to thank Orange for its sponsorship of this report and the customers of Orange who have provided time and help in its preparation.

Quocirca is a primary research and analysis company specialising in the business impact of information technology and communications (ITC). With world-wide, native language reach, Quocirca provides in-depth insights into the views of buyers and influencers in large, mid-sized and small organisations. Its analyst team is made up of real-world practitioners with firsthand experience of ITC delivery who continuously research and track the industry and its real usage in the markets.

Through researching perceptions, Quocirca uncovers the real hurdles to technology adoption – the personal and political aspects of an organisation's environment and the pressures of the need for demonstrable business value in any implementation. This capability to uncover and report back on the end-user perceptions in the market enables Quocirca to advise on the realities of technology adoption, not the promises.

Quocirca research is always pragmatic, business orientated and conducted in the context of the bigger picture. ITC has the ability to transform businesses and the processes that drive them, but often fails to do so. Quocirca's mission is to help organisations improve their success rate in process enablement through better levels of understanding and the adoption of the correct technologies at the correct time.

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