



consumerization
technology
is it really good for business?

Consumerization technology. Is it really good for business?

Consumerization in the enterprise is one of the most hotly debated issues today. To take advantage of consumerization, CIOs must ask two questions: “why shouldn’t we?” and “why do employees have access to better, faster, newer technology at home than at work?”

This white paper explores how consumerization can deliver significant benefits to an organization, and what the key considerations are when looking to adopt a consumer or a ‘bring/buy-your-own (BYO)’ scheme. Today’s BYO discussions are limited to device choice, but shouldn’t BYO extend further into other aspects of the corporate infrastructure? This paper outlines the potential benefits of adopting this way of working.

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Definition and scope

There are compelling reasons why consumerization can have a positive impact on the enterprise, but blockers must be removed to make change possible and benefits clear.

An IT infrastructure provides the backbone of an organization in the 21st Century. Without the correct infrastructure, an organization risks being inefficient and uncompetitive in a highly competitive world. At the same time, a state-of-the-art infrastructure is not going to automatically make an organization a class leader; it is the people who use the infrastructure that make that possible. A corporate IT infrastructure covers a wide array of technology, ranging from data centers, business applications and networking to the desktop PC or laptop used to access company data and systems. Traditionally, this has been an environment restricted and standardized into a homogeneous environment in order to drive down the cost of management and keep control of corporate assets.

Towards the end of the 20th Century, corporate IT infrastructures evolved rapidly. At the same time, personal computing and the Internet were considered to be relatively new concepts in an embryonic phase. As a result, the use of technology in the home was limited and people often only accessed a computer at work, using a corporate device. Fast forward to today and the inflexion point where consumer IT caught up and was on a par with corporate IT is now just a distant memory. Computers and the Internet are a part of everyday life for almost a third of the world's population. The availability of desirable consumer electronics has escalated, at a growth rate with an uncanny similarity to that predicted by Moore's law.

The working environment as we know it today is changing. The types of jobs that exist, the ways of communicating and sharing with others and the demands of the next generation of employees are pushing the boundaries in every way. 'Cool' new devices and technology is available to consumers first, and where previously only large organizations and governments produced and consumed information (prosumers), today everyone connected to the Internet is a prosumer, creating, sharing and storing data from a wide range of devices.

So why has the corporate world stood still and remained such a monolithic and homogeneous environment when the way of working is evolving, despite legacy foundations? Why shouldn't organizations take advantage of the vast array of information, skills and consumer devices in the world today? This is the concept of consumerism. Devices, services or software that is intended for the mass consumer market can cross over and equally be used in a corporate environment. Bring Your Own (BYO) is a core part of this concept, referring to end users providing their own tools, typically a computer or smartphone.

This paper will show the compelling reasons why consumerism can have a positive impact on the enterprise, highlighting which blockers must be removed in order to make this change possible and how a corporate organization can benefit from challenging norms and asking why they shouldn't be adopting this approach.

Enabling diversity - embracing consumer choice

Corporate boundaries are fading and a new Gen Y generation workforce demands a new way of working. About to enter the workforce is Generation Z - digital natives, with life-long use of the Internet, instant messaging, text messaging and smartphones.

Transforming a business can be complex, and enabling a consumer-based model requires management to show vision. Some key changes must be implemented.

Primarily it is about providing the employee the same level of choice within the corporate environment that they expect in private, but with key control systems in place so as not to introduce risk to the business. This is the concept of enabling diversity and a key stepping stone in realizing a new way of working.

Consumerization will be the most significant trend affecting IT departments in the coming years. It is no longer acceptable to provide workers with a workplace environment technologically less developed than their workplace at home. At the same time, corporate boundaries are fading and a new generation (Gen Y) workforce is demanding a new way of working. And about to enter the workforce is Generation Z; digital natives, born in the 1990s, that have had life-long use of the Internet, instant messaging, text messaging and smartphones. They demand even better information technology tooling.

Choice

Some people do not like change, nor do they like choice. It should be recognized that some individuals will be more proactive and embrace new concepts than others. Some users expect to be provided with the tools to do their job role, whilst others strive to gain the freedom to make their own choices.

Any organization considering the introduction of BYO equipment must consider whether whole or part adoption of the concept is appropriate, together with opt-in, opt-out or mandatory schemes. Offering choice to employees may increase complexity, especially in the short term, with consequences not only in the technical domain, but also for Human Resource (HR) policy, employee relations and many other aspects of business.

For an organization to support both a traditional locked-down estate of technologies together with a new-world openness may become too cost prohibitive. But not realizing the benefits of new ways of working, whilst having to continue to support legacy processes, may impede progress.

Reward

A BYO scheme can be delivered as part of an employee reward scheme and can have a beneficial effect in a number of different ways. Positive feedback from employees and an attractive working environment for the workforce of tomorrow will have a significant positive impact. This, combined with the removal of the de-motivating factor of having to struggle with an IT department to be able to work efficiently and an increased level of trust, will be seen as reward enough by many. This could even be extended by offering supplementary benefits, such as insurance schemes, negotiated prices or other options around the core BYO offer.

At Atos, an employee webshop enables users to choose their own corporate mobile phone from a wide range of devices. Budget for purchase, trade-up options and delivery are all carried out by the user via a self-service portal, which is integrated into payroll systems. The BYO phone service has over 3,000 satisfied users.

Which approach is right for which business?

There are a number of different ways in which consumer schemes can be introduced, and ownership of device is often a topic for debate. Whether the device is the user's personal PC (BYO) or whether it is a PC purchased through a company preferred supplier scheme, via an online webshop for dual use, similar to a company car scheme, the end result is similar. Different approaches each have an impact on procurement, HR and remuneration terms and conditions for the end user.

Each approach has different benefits that must be reviewed in defining the right approach for an organization. What remains common to all approaches is that the end user becomes accustomed to the infrastructure changes required to secure such a new way of working. Each approach has different benefits that must be reviewed in defining the right approach for an organization. What remains common to all approaches is that the end user becomes accustomed to the infrastructure changes required to secure such a new way of working.

The business context - consuming the benefits

Personal productivity can increase if workers use a device they are used to. If an employee uses a device with personal data on, then they are more likely to respect it and lose less time dealing with support issues.

If implemented correctly, there can be significant business benefits to adopting a consumer-based model. These can be realized in a number of different ways.

Given the current economic situation, cost reduction is a high priority. Whilst some investment is usually required to enable a BYO scheme, it is possible to reduce infrastructure costs by removing device hardware costs and replacing them with an employee purse or allowance. Significant savings can be made by avoiding refresh projects where logistics and support costs can be significant. This direct reduction in cost is compelling to many organizations. Finally, there are facilities costs that corporate organizations must pay. If more users are mobile or home-based and using their own devices then it becomes possible to reduce the amount of office space required. Higher user-to-desk ratios and simplified office configurations turn buildings into meeting places rather than fixed locations.

If implemented correctly, BYO schemes can improve productivity and efficiency. By focusing on business processes and application delivery to users, it is possible to improve the way of working by simplifying access to applications and making them more widely available to users, from a wider set of locations.

Personal productivity can increase as a result of the user using a device that they are used to and that suits their style of working. Also, if an employee is using a device they choose or one with personal data on, then they are more likely to respect that device and as a result lose less time dealing with support issues or worse. Combine this with the fact that the new found flexibility is highly appreciated by employees and the result is typically more dedication and commitment.

There are some good examples of where a consumer scheme provides benefits. Typically, a contractor is given a device (or two; a smartphone and a laptop) to use whilst they are working for an organization, on top of the premium price for their services. By supporting a consumer model, companies can demand that the contractor arrives fully equipped with those devices.

There is also a risk to the business that the launch of a BYO scheme without the right planning can be costly. Users might choose inappropriate devices or spend too much time distracted by their social life, rather than working. It is possible that using a BYO device is more complicated than using a corporate device if the right infrastructure changes are not made. Checks can be put in place to mitigate such situations. Two ways to safeguard against lost productivity are forcing users to choose devices with support warranties and adjusting the way personal objectives are measured.

As well as the potential for negative user behavior, it is possible that BYO simply does not fit with a job role or industry sector.

For example, fixed staff may not benefit from the approach and a BYO scheme is unlikely to be seen on production lines or in call centers. It is also unlikely that important devices, such as point-of-sale devices or devices in hospitals will be found running on someone's personal laptop.

This reliance on personal devices can help a business be more reactive and flexible. Faster change is possible if the size of the corporate infrastructure is smaller and more focused on what is important to the business. By default, business continuity measures are built into flexible computing approaches. Separation of the user from a device and building means that a disaster in a building does not prevent the user continuing their job.

Finally, BYO has strong green credentials and can be considered a more sustainable approach. This is because the total number of devices managed is reduced significantly. By eliminating the corporate laptop the number of devices an employee has at home is also reduced.

Role	Days	Rate	Total
Exec Project Board	10	1500	10000
Procurement time	10	900	9000
Project Management	50	900	45000
Planning and testing	50	750	37500
Process/documentation	20	750	15000
Rollout time	40	600	24000
Problem Resolution	20	600	12000
		Total	\$160,000

If implemented correctly, there can be significant business benefits to adopting a consumer-based model.

A recent multi-site mobile phone rollout program for 5000 users managed by Atos cost approximately \$160k. Time spent selecting and testing devices, planning and performing the physical handover and configuration of phones can be avoided by enabling employees to source and set up the phones themselves.

The technology context - breaking down the walls

It is no longer feasible to manage every single device that interacts with the business infrastructure. Instead, the environment in which they operate needs to be managed.

The corporate network is an organization's walled garden. It provides an infrastructure closed off from the outside world with restricted access to employees.

Generally, the network is inflexible and can make it difficult to communicate and collaborate with others (often in their own walled garden environments). However, it is perceived to be a highly secure solution and, by standardizing what happens inside this safe haven, costs can be reduced and controlled.

This is a risk adverse approach to security, but it has often prevailed and often for very good reasons. The challenge of protecting an enterprise IT infrastructure from all the threats in the world is a significant one, before personal devices are even introduced into the equation.

But for how long can security be the reason for not changing and is it really the most cost-effective option? How can organizations prepare for new trends in order to take advantage of new ways of working before the competition does and what are the key technology reasons and choices that deploying a consumer approach forces an enterprise IT organization to think about?

Cloud

So why is this about to change? Economic pressures mean that cash to invest in technology improvements is limited. The advent of cloud-based services is having a positive impact on this. Updating technology, providing business users with more functionality and capability without significant CapEx investment is very attractive to many organizations. The key industry players are placing significant investment in changing the way users store and share data, access information and communicate via the cloud.

Once an organization is using cloud services, then why shouldn't the access device be a personal device, such as smartphone, tablet or netbook? The device is gradually becoming the platform for communication, email and calendar applications, as well as a screen or browser for accessing cloud-based services. As this becomes more of a reality, then so does the concept of consumerism.

Despite the above, cloud-based services will take some time to become common place and this means that enterprises are at risk of not taking advantage of this new way of working now. So what else can be done?

Network

The walled garden approach to corporate network design is something that must change. The traditional approach to corporate LANs, WANS, fixed offices and resilient networks is, in many cases, no longer fit for purpose. It may still have a key role to play in some organizations, but these will gradually become the minority because the model no longer fits the requirements of all organizations.

The need for mobility has acted as a catalyst for change, but consumerism could speed up the rate of change further. The speed will depend on the type of organization, but in general these trends will be common:

- ▶ Shrink the corporate network to the edge of the datacenter and use the Internet instead of a corporate WAN for access to services
- ▶ Reduce costs by reducing the number of office locations through home-working initiatives and increased mobile working
- ▶ Deploy network access control security measures. Enable a quarantine solution where unknown devices can be identified and moved to a network segment with limited services and open Internet access. This allows any device to connect to the corporate network without risk of data loss or threats to internal systems. For devices that are identified as 'known', enforce checks such as a security patch level, AV signature or certificate, before allowing access to the core network services
- ▶ Enable simple remote access. Allow employees to connect over standard Internet connections from anywhere, either browser-based or client applications securely streamed, without the need for a VPN connection and token. This reduces costs and improves the end-user experience
- ▶ Investment is required to make change, but investment can unlock significant savings once implemented.

Security - when devices are no longer managed

The traditional walled garden model has some fundamental problems; it neglects what is important to organizations and where the threats to an organization originate from. It is no longer feasible to manage every single device that interacts with the business infrastructure. Instead, the environment in which they operate needs to be managed. This will be achieved through the following approaches:

- ▶ **Manage the core network** - use advanced Network Access Control (NAC) or Network Access Protection (NAP) technologies to protect the environment and also implement secure network areas where restricted access must be maintained for customers
- ▶ **Secure data** - by centralizing corporate data and encrypting it whilst in transit and at rest, (controlling access by) application-based access policies, exploiting SSL VPN technologies
- ▶ **Stolen devices** - an organization may choose to wipe devices once reported stolen, regardless of ownership. This might appear in the terms and conditions for the employee that, if a device is stolen, then the owner of data contained on the device is able to remotely 'kill' or wipe the device
- ▶ **Maintain Quality of Service for business processes** - new ways and basic filtering
- ▶ **Exploit changing consumer patterns** - for instance, increasing bandwidth available to the home worker through broadband, reducing the requirement for centrally-provided corporate bandwidth
- ▶ **A change of emphasis** - to focus on securing applications, and data in particular, rather than the device, through the use of secure containers
- ▶ **Identity is a major consideration in consumerism** - when interacting with services, is the user acting as a private individual or as an employee? The distinction will become increasingly blurred as unification occurs.

Delivering business applications

Some changes are required to enable a consumer scheme, shifting thinking towards management of the virtual workplace and not the desktop device. Critical to all businesses are applications. Without these, employees are unable to carry out their job. Therefore, before considering a BYO scheme, the question of how to enable access to applications is critical.

As a result, more focus on new ways to distribute applications is required. Options include using Application Virtualization, App Stores, or a renewed push towards making all corporate applications web-based. Technologies similar to Citrix XenApp and XenDesktop can help enable access without costly and time-consuming application redevelopment. Google and Microsoft are already making web-based versions of well-known office applications and so this can also be an option.

All of these technologies must function across the Internet as well as the corporate network. Some application redevelopment may be required so that applications are always rendered and delivered to the end user, regardless of device form and screen size.

Delivering a corporate image

Distributing an entire corporate workplace (using Virtual Desktop Infrastructure technologies) is another increasingly popular option. Standard corporate image management will potentially no longer be required as users will bring their own so this removes cost and complexity. What is left is much simpler. New client virtualization technology (Such as Citrix XenClient) can provide exciting options for maintaining multiple virtual images on one device, providing complete segregation between environments.

Supporting the workforce and workplace

All too often workplace management is based on the device first and then the employee as the user of the device. This concept must change, placing the user at the center. The introduction of consumer devices can help achieve this. BYO will free up valuable time that is spent discussing makes, models and versions; conversations that are all too common and add little value. This will allow CIOs and their teams to focus on removing costs from their service and providing added value back to the business.

Specifically, a Bring Your Own scheme can eliminate costs in the following ways:

- ▶ Hardware, 'break-fix' and desk-side support services will be transformed and perhaps even eliminated, being replaced by a courier service or fully remote support services. The user buys a device with a warranty and as a result is fully responsible for hardware fixes
- ▶ Management overheads will be reduced. By entrusting responsibility to the end user, the amount of contacts with a central helpdesk is automatically reduced as is the amount of logistics, procurement and support required
- ▶ Longer term, once devices are owned by the user, there may not even be a requirement for software compliance processes and tooling

- ▶ Unified communications technologies, which include presence, instant messaging, VoIP and video conferencing, greatly improve the remote communications experience so remote working is more effective and productive
- ▶ The changes to the way support is made available to users must be provided in a clear policy at the outset. This is essential so that users have the right level of expectation about the type and level of support they will receive as a BYO user. If users are uncomfortable with the terms of the service, then they can opt to keep a corporate device.

Some readers may think that this is an interesting concept, but in reality far too difficult to implement and manage. Perhaps think of it this way; if an organization has weak policy-based control and users have full administrative rights to their corporate devices, then it already allows freedom to users. Whether they are authorized to make changes to the systems or not, a large percentage will be doing just that. In this scenario, the organization has the concept in place, but without the proper controls.

Others will consider that the scheme is only applicable to technically-competent people. This is not entirely true as two factors contribute to dispel this myth. Firstly, technology is getting simpler to use. It is everywhere and the days of computers being specialist items have long been a thing of the past. Secondly, the level of technical competency of employees is higher now than ever before and this is going to explode as Gen Y and Gen Z begin to dominate the workforce.

Once an organization is using cloud services, then why shouldn't the access device be a personal device, such as smartphone, tablet or netbook?

Legal, regulatory and security considerations

By stipulating which devices and software solutions are used in a corporate environment, access to information can be controlled with a reasonable level of confidence. But there are other ways to manage exposures.

Data security

Perhaps the biggest current concern for all organizations is the security of information – protecting it from loss or leakage to the public (which may have legal ramifications) or competitors. By stipulating which devices and software solutions are used in a corporate environment, access to information can be controlled with a reasonable level of confidence.

Encryption technologies, device tracking, and now the ability to remotely wipe data from portable devices, aid in controlling the availability of information and reducing risk of exposure. As soon as non-controlled devices and software are introduced, this confidence is diminished and risks increase.

It is therefore important that the consideration of self-provided (BYO) solutions by an employer is backed up and supported by the inclusion of technological measures to continue to manage data security appropriately.

Software compliance and licensing

Software compliance is a significant consideration when adopting a BYO scheme. How applications are deployed and how they fit with the licensing terms of a particular vendor is very complex. Full consideration of what using a particular piece of software on non-corporate devices or the delivery of applications per user, rather than per device, must be fully understood. Furthermore, steps must be taken to ensure the final solution is fully compliant.

Solutions such as virtual desktops or terminal services can prevent applications being installed on an end user's device, potentially simplifying the issue. Wider acceptance of open-source applications in the workplace could also enable a smoother transition to BYO. A robust lifecycle management process is essential in order to install, manage and revoke software from unmanaged devices, whilst remaining compliant.

Health and safety

A company has a duty of care to its employees' welfare. In an IT context, workstation assessments ensure that the working environment is suitable for the employee. This covers areas such as correct posture, appropriate lighting and adherence to recognized standards on device emissions. However, self-provided equipment may undermine the ability for organizations to provide these guarantees. With employee choice comes employee responsibility to select appropriate equipment for the working environment or to accept any shortfall and associated health and safety risk.

HR, personal benefits and taxation

HR policy may have to be adjusted to support consumer models in the workplace. Opt-in or opt-out clauses and changes to the hiring and firing processes as an example. Taxation law varies from country to country, but in some regions there are tax benefits to the organization and to the individual when self-provided equipment is used. How the device is purchased might vary depending on the country where the scheme is being implemented in order to mutually benefit employee and employer.

Privacy

The blend of consumer (personal) and corporate information leads to privacy concerns – both for the individual and the company. Where does the corporate environment end and private life begin? What is acceptable on a privately-provided device that is not acceptable on a corporate device? The management of these issues will need to mature as both individuals and companies become accustomed to shared environment.

Why stop at devices?

Today, collaboration is tightly integrated with corporate directories to enable integration with office productivity tools, and fast contact look-up within the corporate environment. But should it be restricted to this?

'Bring Your Own' in the context of physical end-user devices, predominantly computers and smartphones has been considered above. However it does not end here. Below are a series of BYO objects that individuals are now bringing to the corporate world.

Bring Your Own social networking tools

Services such as LinkedIn and Plaxo have been built with the goal of establishing networks of professional contacts. These professional social networks have many uses, including recruitment and collaboration, and are now being integrated with other services. The networks are now even being embraced in classical corporate tools such as Microsoft Outlook. The Outlook social connector transparently brings in the individual's professional social network into the Outlook contact list, and thence to any smartphone that is integrated with Outlook. There are privacy concerns with services such as Facebook at the moment, but notwithstanding these issues, Facebook and similar social networking tools further extend corporate collaboration opportunities.

Bring Your Own knowledge community

The LinkedIn service mentioned above has introduced knowledge groups and discussion forums. This joins other knowledge communities such as Experts Exchange (which covers the field of IT) and other community groups that collaborate with each other to supplement traditional vendor support channels.

Bring Your Own email platform

Whilst perhaps considered a dangerous prospect, any email that is transported openly over the Internet (for instance, exchanged between different organizations) could be held on an individual's private email service with no further loss of security or privacy. The use of public, and often free email services such as Google's Gmail or Microsoft Live could become commonplace - with or without corporate branding and corporate email addressing.

Bring Your Own collaboration tools

The corporate world is introducing collaboration technologies to improve communication, reduce travel, associated costs and enhance green credentials.

Today, collaboration is tightly integrated with corporate directories to enable integration with office productivity tools, and fast contact look-up within the corporate environment. But should it be restricted to this? Public tools such as MSN Messenger have historically provided more advanced collaboration features than corporate options, and work across company boundaries. Newer kids on the block include Google Talk, now with voice and video communication, and there are other forms of collaboration such as Twitter.

Bring Your Own data store in the cloud

Cloud-based storage enables the sharing of information across companies and reduces email inbox bloat. It facilitates access from multiple devices and locations, enabling a user to transfer between laptop, smartphone and tablet device, as appropriate. Services such as Google Docs provide collaborative

editing environments, with multiple users all simultaneously contributing content. But as with all data stored in non-controlled locations there needs to be a risk assessment on the impact of loss of access, loss of data and loss of privacy.

Bring Your Own applications

Whilst over the past decade there has been a general trend towards Internet technologies and cloud delivery, there has been a recent resurgence of the application. This has been driven by Apple's App Store concept and now the Android marketplace. Whilst originally targeting consumers with smartphones, these applications are now providing improved and targeted functionality on tablet devices and are expected to pervade other areas, such as television set-top boxes. The choice of application and the way of working will be made by the individual, rather than by a corporate dictator, with the goal of enabling increased productivity and work satisfaction, whilst adherence to standards enables data compatibility across applications.

Bring Your Own identity

The concept of using federated identity from Internet or cloud-based services is relatively new, but could have profound effects in the future. Seamless integration of corporate and private identity is something that will scare some, but also provide benefits to users. The future might include users bringing their own identity and authentication mechanism with them (e.g. biometrics) rather than traditional LDAP-based authentication.

A vision of the future

The relationship between the corporate and personal world is blurring all the time.

Work and employees

Companies will be able to demonstrate reduced costs as their workforces become increasingly IT literate and use their own IT resources in order to perform work.

As the boundary between personal and business life increasingly blurs, spurred by advances in consumer technology used in a business context, the relationship between company and employee also changes:

- ▶ The business no longer provides equipment for employees
- ▶ The business/employee relationship becomes looser
- ▶ Employees behave more like freelance workers
- ▶ Employees increasingly work for multiple companies.

The elimination of the corporate infrastructure

Expensive corporate network infrastructures with ineffective boundary controls will become a thing of the past. Workers will use current and future Internet technologies for all their communication needs - corporate and personal.

Corporate networks will shrink to just core infrastructure and data. Outlying offices will move to VPN and VPN-less technologies, accessing remote corporate data at a corporate base location or in the cloud.

Application delivery will predominantly move to Internet technologies using RESTful architectures. Applications requiring more complex and performance-intensive local interaction will be delivered to remote devices using Internet-wide delivery and control mechanisms.

Elimination of the business-specific device and application market

Today a large percentage of device sales, for instance laptops and phones, occur in corporate markets. Vendors delivering to these markets have specific device ranges for business. In the short term they will continue to develop business-differentiating technologies at a price premium in an attempt to keep these markets buoyant.

However, as the value of these differentiators diminishes, and, for instance, management features become more prevalent in consumer devices, then the premium business market will reduce and eventually disappear. As consumer technology improves, and consumer IT proficiency increases, many organizations will consider consumer solutions to be 'good enough'.

Taking the first steps to consumerism

Consumerization should help all workers, without segregating users into groups based on historical data or stereotypes.

It maybe that the benefits of a consumer or BYO scheme are clear, but it is not a viable option at the moment. In that case, there are a number of things that can be done to ensure that the concept and way of working can be applied at a later date.

To begin with, how control in the infrastructure is managed and can be administered in other ways that do not negatively impact users can be explored. Infrastructure projects that will pave the way for BYO schemes can be planned. This way of thinking will bring the organization benefits, whether consumerism is the end game or not.

Organizations could also engage with suppliers to identify a wider range of devices on offer from the corporate catalogue and provide more choice to the user. They could consider relaxing rules on website filtering and the use of personal devices. This could possibly begin with mobile phones, but must always ensure that company policies are revised to align new expectations and levels of trust for this freedom.

The impact of cultural change could be investigated and parts of the organizations that could work in new and different ways identified with changes made to business processes in these areas. In combination with process analysis and change, pilot schemes could be run, possibly linked to end-user efficiency studies, such as Lean.

This will enable quantification of the impact on end-user productivity. Running such programs on an optional opt-in basis is considered best and also gives the user population the opportunity to volunteer and be part of something new and exciting.

The HR and taxation aspects of such solutions should not be ignored. The most effective approach should also be identified early on.

Finally, it is important not to focus just on the new (Gen Y) staff within the organization. The strategy should help all users, without segregating users into groups based on historical data or stereotypes. Other factors of personal preference, lifestyle or job type may arise, other than age, which will see certain people interested in such schemes and others prefer the security of the traditional approach.

Summary

Consumerism is not going to work in every organization or be suitable for every person. But in the right environment and with the right user base it will have a transformational effect on an organization and the perception of the workforce, something which should not be underestimated. Until traditional norms are challenged and this approach considered, an organization will not discover the possibilities it can unlock.

In essence, it is about embracing and enabling diversity and choice, but with control over what is really important to the core business. By enabling such a way of working, a company automatically offers users more choices to work in a way they prefer and at the same time remove a significant part of the cost base. The organization gains flexible working, positive feedback from employees and creates an attractive working environment for the workforce of tomorrow.

The de-motivating factor of having to struggle with an IT department in order to be able to work efficiently should never be underestimated. Consumer technology can unequivocally help businesses today, but ultimately consumerism may not transform a business on its own. A new way of thinking and challenging why things shouldn't be done differently to current corporate norms can have a significant role to play in transforming the perception of corporate IT in the eyes of the users and consequently the customers they come into contact with.

Resulting benefits range from cost reduction, creation of an infrastructure ready to meet the demands of the future mobile workforce, and a focus on securing and providing the services that really matter to the business. The pressure for change from both the current and future employee is higher than ever before and this is only going to increase as the pace of innovation in 'cool' consumer technology continues.

Once a consumer approach has been established, it means one less thing for the CIO to think about, enabling a shift in focus to the added-value services that really matter to the business.

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This publication has been prepared by the Atos Scientific Community. Atos helps its clients make the most critical choices regarding the future. Our Scientific Community, currently a network of some 60 members, represents a mix of all skills and backgrounds, and members come from all geographies in which Atos operates. Its aim is to anticipate upcoming technology disruptions and craft a vision to address the new challenges facing the IT services industry. Atos is investing in the Scientific Community's findings and making this vision available to its clients and partners.

About Atos

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