



10 Considerations

When Upgrading Your
Mobile Devices



Don't Let Outdated Devices Drag You Down

Outdated devices can expose your operations to pain points such as excessive downtime, loss of productivity, increased maintenance costs, security concerns, the inability to run certain programs or apps, and the threat of falling behind competitors. Simply stated, aging, obsolete technologies can't help your mobile workforce overcome the challenges they face today, and ones they will encounter down the road. The efficiency, productivity, and profitability of your enterprise are a direct reflection of your front-line workforce's performance. And how well your front-line workforce performs is greatly dependent on the mobile technology they use in their day-to-day duties.

Having the latest and greatest technology in your workforce's hands can allow for tremendous improvements in accuracy, efficiency, productivity, and profitability across industries — from the manufacturing floor to the warehouse, and from the retail store to the hospital.

Regular mobile device upgrades are undoubtedly important. However, these projects require forethought and planning to ensure success. There are a wide variety of elements to consider when upgrading: device security, end-user training, battery life, total cost of ownership, and more. For business-critical applications, it is also vital to select a rugged, enterprise-grade device to ensure reliability.

We have outlined ten major challenges and their key considerations when preparing for a mobile device upgrade.

1 Battery Life

The challenge: Full-shift battery life is a critical aspect of your enterprise's productivity. Long-lasting batteries that can be quickly and fully charged help improve productivity by eliminating the downtime from battery swaps and device replacements. As mobile devices age, the batteries drain more quickly and require more time to charge. As a result, mobile workers have to switch devices or batteries frequently (which takes a toll on productivity) or keep devices plugged in (which inhibits mobility).

What to consider: If you have noticed battery life has become considerably shorter or charging has become more difficult, it is time to consider a device upgrade. Key elements to consider when choosing a new device include full-shift battery life, rapid charging, and hot-swappable batteries.

2 Frequency of Upgrade

The challenge: Mobile technology advancements have, and continue to, steadily accelerate. As a result, lengthy technology refresh cycles may prevent the adoption of new features and functionality that inherently improve the performance of your mobile workforce. This issue has become especially important as Windows-based mobile operating systems reach their end-of-life.

What to consider: Due to standard device lifecycles, be prepared to budget for an upgrade every three to five years. If productivity has been hampered by an outdated interface or the inability to access updated features, an upgrade may be in order now. For companies still using Windows-based devices, migration to Android-based systems will be even more critical moving forward. Many of these newer devices include advanced features and access to automatic operating system and security updates. This can help extend the lifespan of the devices and further improve productivity. Enterprise mobile devices typically have a longer lifecycle (5+ years) than consumer-grade devices (18 – 24 months) based on their inherently rugged design. If you want stronger performance, lower TCO, and durability, it is best to go with an enterprise-grade device.





3 Manageability

The challenge: Mobile devices should help, not hinder your IT department. However, the proliferation of mobile devices across the enterprise has presented a challenge to information technology (IT) departments. Central and remote management of the entire mobile fleet is critical for easily tracking your device inventory, upgrading software, troubleshooting, device maintenance, and ensuring security patches are current.

What to consider: Modern devices support mobile device management (MDM) solutions that enable IT staff to support mobile workers, deploy updates, and security patches to the entire fleet at once, and efficiently manage the devices. Effective MDM can be a tremendous help for your IT and help desk staff while further improving your mobile workforce's productivity. MDM support is an important consideration for businesses with a large fleet of mobile devices, as well as companies that are growing rapidly.

4 Screen Size

The challenge: Older mobile computers had limited screen sizes, which, consequently, limit end-users in their ability to multitask on the device. These limitations require more time to complete routine tasks in comparison to using a newer device with better user experience.

What to consider: Modern devices have larger screens, as well as sharper, full-color touchscreens. The screen on your mobile device should be large enough to allow end-users to multitask, but small enough so that the screen isn't cumbersome to utilize. For some applications, an on-screen keypad is available; other use cases may require a physical keypad. For enterprise tablets, accessories — such as mounts, straps, etc. — should be purchased and implemented to improve usability and ergonomics.

5 Security

The challenge: The risks and consequences of a security breach to your enterprise are tremendous — and if you are running a small business, they could even be dire. In the past, rugged mobile devices were not considered a security concern because they were only linked to the internal network. However, modern mobility platforms often include Internet connectivity, connections to cloud-based applications, and access to sensitive information. This makes them as vulnerable to a cyberattack as a desktop computer or data center.

What to consider: Mobile device security features should enable only authorized users to access the computer with a passcode, pattern unlock, fingerprint, or facial recognition technology. The hardware features, capabilities of devices, and management of these mobile devices and their applications should all meet the same enterprise-class security requirements as the rest of your IT infrastructure.

6 Speed

The challenge: The time it takes your device to load programs is time that your workforce isn't being productive. Older devices, their operating systems, and their user interfaces don't have the required additional computing resources and bandwidth to quickly load essential operational programs and applications.

What to consider: Processor performance has improved with each new generation of mobile device, so an upgrade can help increase application performance and overall productivity. When upgrading, choose devices and processors with speeds that fit your enterprise's needs — if the programs you run on your mobile devices don't require the latest and greatest processor, consider a lesser option. However, if software upgrades are in your future, a faster processor may be worth considering.





7 Storage

The challenge: As technology and our dependency on mobile devices advances, so has the need for more memory and storage. Older devices typically will have less memory than new ones. However, you don't have to break the bank for more storage capacity since the cost of memory has fallen.

What to consider: When shopping for new devices, consider how many applications the device will need to run and how much data may need to be stored on them. Will mobile workers primarily be working online or off? Are you using cloud-based applications or native apps? If your mobile devices are continuously running out of space or requiring multiple back-ups, an upgrade will help improve data management and storage.

8 Support/Repair

The challenge: Selecting the right mobile device is not just about picking suitable hardware; you also need support. Although rugged mobile devices are built to withstand an enterprise environment's rigors, they can still malfunction or be damaged. When it happens, is your enterprise prepared to maintain productivity without missing a beat?

What to consider: Take a look at how your enterprise uses support and repair services with the current fleet (frequency of repairs, downtime, etc.), and consider the right mix of repair/support options. When you upgrade, make sure you work with a trusted vendor that will stand by your investment by providing full device replacement, fast turnaround times on repairs, on-site service, and no-questions-asked coverage. Also, make sure that your vendor is a certified partner with the device manufacturer. A certification ensures that they are experts on the product and have access to specialized solutions, discounts, and support training.

9 Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

The challenge: Your mobile hardware's upfront cost isn't the only cost you have to calculate when comparing devices. Despite their lower initial acquisition cost, consumer-grade technology can result in a significantly higher TCO over the lifetime of the mobile solution.

What to consider: Enterprise mobile deployments have various requirements that consumer devices simply cannot meet, including:

- rapid bar code scanning
- payment processing
- ruggedization
- resistance to moisture or chemicals

Using consumer-grade devices for these applications can require a significant investment in protective cases and peripherals. The cost of damaged devices and obsolescence over time can significantly increase TCO. Consumer smartphones can increase TCO by up to 50 percent compared to ruggedized devices. For mission-critical applications, the extra cost of rugged, enterprise-class devices will pay off in the long term.



10 Training/Ease of Use

The challenge: Upgrading to new devices can initially reduce productivity as employees adjust to new interfaces, applications, and workflows. How easily can your workforce adopt new devices, and how fluent are they in using modern mobile technology?

What to consider: A device that is easy to use can significantly accelerate deployment schedules. For industries with a large number of seasonal or temporary workers, devices that are easy to use and to train workers on are the best choice, as ramp-up times can be cut significantly.

Your choice in operating system can also make a big difference. Android and iOS are two major platforms that workers are already familiar with. In turn, they help employees adopt mobile devices more quickly and spend less time on training.



Upgrade with Confidence! We're Here to Help You Choose the Right Mobile Device

When you are planning to upgrade your organization's mobile devices, there is a lot to consider beyond just the specifications of the hardware: security, support, manageability, and long-term costs are also important decision points.

By evaluating your own operational needs and keeping these ten considerations top of mind when shopping for your next mobile technology solution, you can help ensure a successful upgrade.

Ready to achieve higher performance? Come see how a mobile technology upgrade can benefit your business. We are here to help!

GET STARTED

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Since established in 1997, we have been leveraging solid partnerships with the industry's principal hardware, software and supply manufacturers. Our premier level status with all manufacturers, along with our authorized on-site/depot repair, wireless infrastructure services, and commitment to excellence allow us to bring you the total solution.