How to Balance Your Telephony Priorities

FINDING THE IT SWEET SPOT

The only constant is change

Today's IT decision makers are facing a rapidly changing digital landscape. The priorities of IT departments within businesses are evolving, driven by three distinct pressures:

1

The move from the ground to the cloud

We're not using 56k dial up anymore. The ubiquity of high bandwidth data connections has made cloud technology readily available to businesses of all sizes. As such, many are moving their on-premise infrastructure – servers, backups, PBXs and so on – to external cloud providers. Instead of large upfront investments in licensing and physical hardware, mid-size businesses are finding that a pay-for-what-you-use model that will scale with their growth ambitions is the way forward.

2

The rise of the mobile workforce

The days of employees commuting into a big city office for the 9 to 5 are numbered. The way people want to work has changed; flexible hours and remote working practices are becoming the norm. As a result, employees need to be able to access company systems from home or from out on the road. And IT departments must ensure all professional tools and applications are accessible across a range of personal devices, including smartphones, laptops or tablets.

The only constant is change

3

More to do but less people to do it with

According to research by Computer Weekly, IT departments will have shrunk by as much as 75% in the period from 2013 to 2018[1]. At the same time, the IT department is being asked to do more than ever, expanding its remit into a more strategic role. IT Directors must now advise other areas of the business, such as Operations, Finance, Marketing and Procurement, on technology decisions and how they can deliver against the wider commercial goals set by the business. This must also often be balanced with day-to-day support, device management and usability requirements.

To remain competitive and relevant in this changing landscape, IT decision makers must shift their priorities. This eGuide will explore how IT leaders can deal with the increasing pressures that face them and offer practical approaches that will help you grow the IT function, power innovation and deliver tangible growth for the business.

The pressure:
The move to the cloud

The new priority:
Outsourcing core processes

[1] http://www.computerweekly.com/news/2240186146/IT-departments-to-shrink-dramatically-within-five-years-as-cloud-accelerates

What does this mean for you?

As your responsibilities expand to a more strategic level, your IT department must shift their focus towards delivering the things that add value to the entire business. This means that you can no longer spare the time to deal with the everyday, 'keeping-the-lights-on' infrastructure issues and administration.

This is actually where the move to the cloud can be hugely beneficial. The main priority for IT decisions makers here then becomes to find the balance between what is managed internally and what is outsourced to a supplier and delivered as part of a managed service. Consider the core business processes where you spend most of your time fixing problems.

These are the things that you should think about transferring to another provider. This will allow you to shift the burden of support to a third party.

The benefit:
Less time spent resolving core IT infrastructure issues and more time to consider strategic technology deployments that will benefit the business.

What you should be asking yourself

? What are the most common IT issues that employees are having?

? What are the core IT processes that you spend the majority of your time managing?

? Can these capabilities be outsourced to a third party supplier who can handle the management and support?

"Your priorities must change from what you are doing today to what you are going to be doing next year. You don't have time to worry about keeping the lights on, so push it onto providers who can do it for you."

The pressure:
The mobile workforce

The new priority:
Facilitating mobile ways of working

What does this mean for you?

In today's digital workplace, the end-user dictates how they want to interact with the business. The main goal is therefore to make this as easy as possible, ensuring that all the applications and tools that workers need are accessible wherever they are, through a device of their choice.

This could mean implementing VoIP technology so that employees working remotely have access to the same corporate phonebook and features they have on their office phone on their mobile or via a desktop app. It could mean optimising all your systems so that they can be accessed through an online portal to make changes to user settings, rather than logging into an on-premise server or PBX.

It could even mean investing in a mobile service that prioritises business call and data traffic at the network level and offers an improved level of network coverage – ensuring that your employees are always available to customers and colleagues alike.

Benefits:
Delivering the mobile experience employees demand not only boosts productivity, it also raises the employer brand and reputation of the business.

What you should be asking yourself
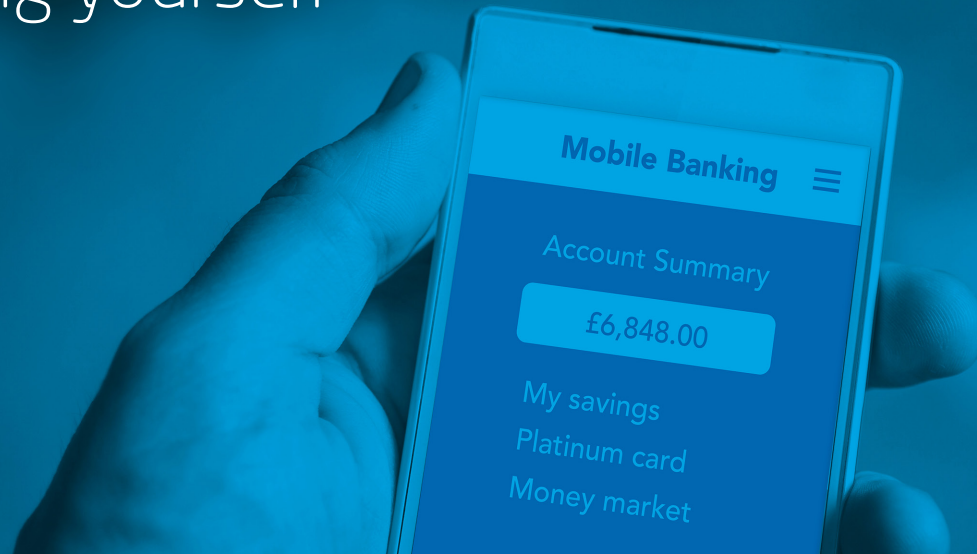
(?) Am I delivering the digital tools that my employees and customers need in the way they expect?

(?) Could I invest in technology that enables a flexible and mobile working experience?

(?) Are the services I am delivering to employees allowing them to work as efficiently as possible?

"Think about how we interact with banks now – very few people actually log onto a banking website anymore. It's all done through mobile apps because it's far more convenient for the customer. Whether you deliver it in house or via a trusted partner, this is the kind of end-user focus that you should be delivering with your digital infrastructure."

The pressure:
Shrinking IT teams with greater responsibilities

The new priority:
Consolidating all services with a single supplier

Mobile Banking

Account Summary

£6,848.00

My savings
Platinum card
Money market

What does this mean for you?

A lot of time and resource is expended on managing suppliers. And if you've got multiple agreements for multiple services with multiple providers, then that drain on resources is only going to multiply.

Finding a provider that can offer everything you need under one roof will free up the time spent managing these relationships, helping you to focus on more strategic IT initiatives.

It is also easier to meet service requirements coming from within your business if you are dealing with one provider and their services are interlinked, or if their solutions can solve several business needs.

Benefits:
Reduced time and cost spent managing suppliers and contracts, as well as the economies of scale a single provider can offer across multiple services.

What should I be asking myself

? How many third party providers supply IT services to my business?

? Could I consolidate some or all of these services with one provider?

"Does it really make sense to have one provider for data, another for voice and another mobile? The most sensible solution would be to find one provider that can deliver all three to your business. Chances are they will also be able to deliver other services around those solutions should the need arise within your business."

So what's next?

It can seem like an insurmountable task to balance supplier consolidation, technology change and facilitating mobile working, all at once. But the rapidly changing world of digital business will not wait for you to figure it all out.

It might be a good idea to consider a pilot scheme to outsource one of your businesses processes and trial improved technology, perhaps something like telephony or mobile, and establish the business case. You will be able to see first-hand how making the change will free up the extra resource to drive strategic technology initiatives in the organisation.

And if you choose a provider with a broad portfolio of solutions, you may be able to consolidate some of your other services with them later.