



Your business can use mobile apps to be more productive and efficient and also more profitable. We look at the business benefits and the different elements that you need to consider when developing your first enterprise app.

Although large enterprises have been a bit slow to start developing mobile apps, [Gartner analysts predict](#) that soon the demand for enterprise mobile app development will outstrip the available development capacity by five to one. So why is there going to be such a huge spurt in demand? Because businesses like yours are waking up to the fact that mobile apps can improve the bottom line while also making everything run much more smoothly.

## The needs and challenges of large enterprises

We know that in your business you have to keep track of a lot of people, processes and data to make sure that you can keep your costs under control and meet targets, be they for sales, production and marketing, or for regulatory objectives around health, safety and the environment. At the same time you have to keep customers, stakeholders and staff satisfied while also managing your brand reputation and reporting on your performance across all areas of the business.

But one of the biggest challenges that businesses face today is the rapid pace of change in technology developments. This affects every department - from the way you market your products or services and deliver after sales customer service, through to how you integrate information from different departments to develop effective strategies, how your manufacturing processes work and how your finances are managed.

That's a lot to keep track of and that's where mobile apps can help and make doing business in the modern world a lot easier to manage. As long as you get the right mobile app designed it will deliver real value for your business in many different ways and will be able to grow alongside you. First and foremost, the biggest benefit is that it will help you to increase your turnover, cut costs and ultimately be

more profitable. It will also help you to identify where in the organisation you need to make changes to your processes to be more productive and efficient.

Then there's the added benefit that it will enable you and your staff to keep track of all the things you need to wherever you are, and also share vital information with colleagues. No longer will you need to be at your desk to access and share the information that you need in order to make quick decisions.

But although the benefits that mobile apps can bring to your business are huge there are other things you need to consider when thinking about the value a project will deliver, as the costs don't just come in paying for the development of the app.

## Total Cost of Ownership of corporate apps

Obviously when trying to work out the total cost of ownership (TCO) to see whether a mobile app is going to deliver real value for your business, the software development is the first cost you have to think about. What many organisations fail to take into account though is the costs, in both time and money, for all the other factors that surround it.

These include the hardware, implementation planning and roll-out, and the change management project that you need internally to ensure the app is understood and used by the staff it's been developed for. A lack of effective change management is one of the main reasons that so many technology projects don't deliver what they were expected to. So it's vital to factor the cost and time for this in; and to realise that change management shouldn't start when you've already decided what app you're going to develop but instead include the teams that will be using it right from the start so that their needs and ideas influence and inform the project in the planning stage.

One of the biggest questions to answer when thinking about TCO is of course going to be around ROI and while there is never going to be a one timescale fits all enterprises answer, typically you can expect to see a custom developed mobile app deliver a return within 1-2 years. It depends on many factors, such as the other systems it needs to work with, the data available to feed into it, and whether it's an enterprise-wide app or one for a specific department or individual process.

## Going mobile

As we said at the start of this article, businesses are now recognising that going mobile is key to their future success and continued business growth. It's expected that in the next two years alone, the continual shift to mobile will see as much as 50% of enterprise applications accessed via mobile.

The digital revolution is now taking us into a new era of how business is done, managed and succeeds. Not only does it make communication easier and enable processes and profits to be improved, it is allowing businesses to take new approaches to planning and strategy development so that they can be more flexible and dynamic and adapt more quickly to changing market conditions, which is ever more important now that competition has gone global.

So making sure that your organisation doesn't get left behind while your competitors embrace the mobile world is going to be crucial to your ongoing success.

## Making your business a bigger success

Essentially what an enterprise app needs to do to be successful for your business and your staff is to empower them with the tools they need to do their job more easily and effectively. It needs to do this through a simple to use interface that doesn't overload them with information. Perhaps most importantly whatever you need your staff to be able to do while they are out and about needs to be accessible through just one app. [Research by Gartner](#) found that manually shifting between apps and email to access the data we need means we can't process information as effectively.

So, once you've considered all of these different elements, what it boils down to is that the real value of a corporate app for enterprises is how it will influence the success of your whole company, even if it is a department specific tool.

We know this to be true as we've seen it happen. An enterprise app for a logistics company enabled them to plan routes better using live traffic data and to monitor driver activity and more accurately calculate the time to destination. This led to reduced delays, increased customer satisfaction and helped them to identify that 25% of their vehicle fleet was not really needed. So by developing an app for a specific process they were able to cut costs considerably and therefore boosted the overall profitability of the company.

A major automobile vendor developed an app that enabled them to manage the process of purchasing spare parts more effectively. Parts needed to be ordered 3 months in advance but the costs they would be charged when they were shipped fluctuated in line with a number of external factors, such as the price of steel, oil and delivery.

So their new app helped them to more accurately forecast what the costs might be 3 months ahead by using data pulled in from lots of different sources and running it through probability algorithms. In the year they built the app this company had annual revenue of €12bn, the app cost €200,000 to develop, and it saved them 5-7% of their spare part costs in the first year of use.

Other examples include a mobile app for a construction company that enable it to access ERP systems on the go, meaning that the amount of supplies needed for construction projects can be more accurately managed leading to less waste, fewer delivery fees and delivering substantial cost savings.

An app for logistics or courier companies that automates the order, collection, delivery and reporting systems and provides the fleet of drivers with a mobile app to send data about each completed job directly to the office. This saves the driver hours of form filling and significantly decreases the amount of errors in the reports. Hours saved means more collections can be made each day to increase the company's income.

By using the mobile app to share information with in-house staff and cutting the amount of errors made, this also means that the workload for office staff can be reduced as they no longer have to process

paper reports and track down the errors within them, so they can focus more time on tasks that add real value to the customer experience.

So as you can see, when it's done right, an enterprise mobile app will cut your costs, improve your processes, and increase the profits of your entire business.