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Mobility in the Enterprise: Let the Games Begin

by Usman Sheikh, SAP

Not only will 2012 be remembered as the year of the Olympic Summer Games in London, it will also be the year companies reached the tipping point in the adoption of mobility as a critical tool for the enterprise. Yet we're just starting to comprehend the vast extent to which enterprises will use mobility. Early indicators suggest that the scope of enterprise mobility will be widespread and create incremental value, having an unprecedented business impact.

Mobility presents businesses with opportunities to completely rethink their existing processes and create new business models, and SAP and its ecosystem of partners are delivering the tools and solutions that customers need to make the most of these unique opportunities.

Three key trends are converging to drive the adoption of mobility in the business world:

- Widespread availability of broadband networks and mobile devices
- Growth of, and easy access to, rich media content
- Emergence of a new breed of mobile apps that serves business content in an easy-to-use, consumer-app-like experience

These trends already have an impact on how we work. For example, I am writing and submitting this article while riding the train between Boston and New York City. In parallel, I am using my iPad to video conference with colleagues in Israel using the free Skype app and the complimentary Wi-Fi network offered by Amtrak. Seeing my colleagues rather than just hearing their voices makes quite a difference in how we

interact. The breadth of mobile solutions from a wide variety of providers working together has enabled me to plug in to my business and social networks from anywhere, and has transformed a mundane afternoon traveling between two cities into a productive and engaging experience. I have virtually traversed halfway around the world to collaborate with colleagues while drafting this article from the comfort of my train seat. This is an unprecedented user experience enabled by mobility. What's most remarkable is that the entire mobile experience is easy to direct regardless of platform or device.

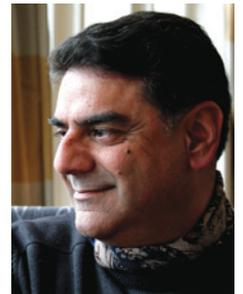
Place First in the Enterprise Mobility Race

The race for mobility in the enterprise is officially on. Mobility as a business channel is not a choice, but an imperative. With billions of mobile devices around the world, the challenge of enabling these devices to access corporate information at the right time and place, enhance productivity, and generate commerce will require a wide swath of solutions working together without major integration concerns.

Here are four key pieces of advice for companies that are looking to develop and deploy mobile business apps.

1. Think Outside of the Box When Conceptualizing New Mobile Apps

Similar to how the Internet changed the way we conduct business, mobility is having far-reaching effects. The ability to access corporate information and processes anytime from anywhere



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presents a unique opportunity to rethink existing processes and business models. Simply extending the current way of doing business to the on-device experience will not be sufficient to win the hearts and minds of mobile users. Go beyond simply forcing existing business processes onto a mobile device to reengineering and inventing new business opportunities. By envisioning your business through the mobile lens, you will see new ways of engaging with your customers, partners, and employees.

2. Create a Consumer-App-Like User Experience for Business Apps

Consumer mobile apps are fun, easy to use, and accessible anywhere. As you plan to develop new mobile apps for your business, think about incorporating features that will keep your users

coming back for more. People will use the app and return to it time and time again if they have an engaging user experience. When developing apps, consider these usability principles:

- Keep in mind the mobile device's screen size.
- Don't emulate the PC experience on the device.
- Design mobile apps that are simple and allow users to perform tasks with ease.
- Provide dynamic, continuously refreshing user experiences by combining the full potential of the mobile device (the native device features) with rich content and social media.

See the "Apps of the Future Are Already Available Within the SAP Ecosystem" sidebar below for more details.

3. Select the Right Mobile Platform to Develop Apps

The rate of innovation of mobile apps is far greater, and release cycles more frequent, than traditional on-premise applications. The mobility experience is iterative — the first mobile app often leads you to realize significant benefits and understand the potential of mobility as a business enabler. This in turn leads to thinking about how mobility can be further applied to bring about greater change in subsequent versions of the app.

Companies are increasingly adopting "bring your own device" (BYOD) policies whereby employees can use their personal mobile devices for work. BYOD policies translate into heterogeneous mobile device landscapes, which present challenges associated with developing and

frequently upgrading apps across multiple mobile devices and operating systems.

Thus it is important that you select a secure and scalable mobile development environment that enables app deployment across multiple types of mobile devices at once. The SAP mobile platform, for example, enables SAP partners and customers to develop targeted mobile apps that are secure and can be published across multiple types of devices and mobile operating systems.

4. Find an App Store Dedicated to Business Apps Appropriate for Your Company

As the number of apps developed within the SAP ecosystem and beyond grows exponentially, SAP customers need a single location to find everything available to help solve their mobile business challenges. The SAP Store for Mobile

Apps of the Future Are Already Available Within the SAP Ecosystem

Delivering a consumer-app-like user experience within mobile business apps is essential to making it easier for business users to adopt and use them. Location-based services, cameras for scanning codes, near-field communications technologies, and improved form factors for presenting RSS and Twitter feeds as visually rich content are just some examples of mobility-driven features that are available today and will influence the next generation of mobile business apps. Key design considerations for mobile apps include:

- Offering a holistic experience rather than just focusing on a single transaction
- Integrating social media elements
- Providing access to relevant business content
- Dynamically refreshing content to provide a new experience and a reason for the user to keep coming back

Let's look at three apps developed within the SAP ecosystem that reflect these design considerations and show how mobile business apps are evolving.

Mobile Corporate Intranet

Designed to mobilize the corporate intranet, this app has many consumer-app-like features, including a more intuitive user interface (UI), content that is relevant to the user's role and is refreshed in real time from RSS feeds, social media links with professional networks and communities, an event calendar, banners linking to action items, videos, content-sharing capabilities, and location-based services

like local weather forecasts (see **Figure 1**). In the future, users will be able to further personalize the app to obtain additional content based on relevant topics.

iPeople from Sovanta AG

Developed by SAP partner Sovanta AG, this human capital management app is designed to help businesses better manage their people. The UI is simple and intuitive, presenting mundane HR information within an interactive experience. For instance, the app uses Google maps and layers data from

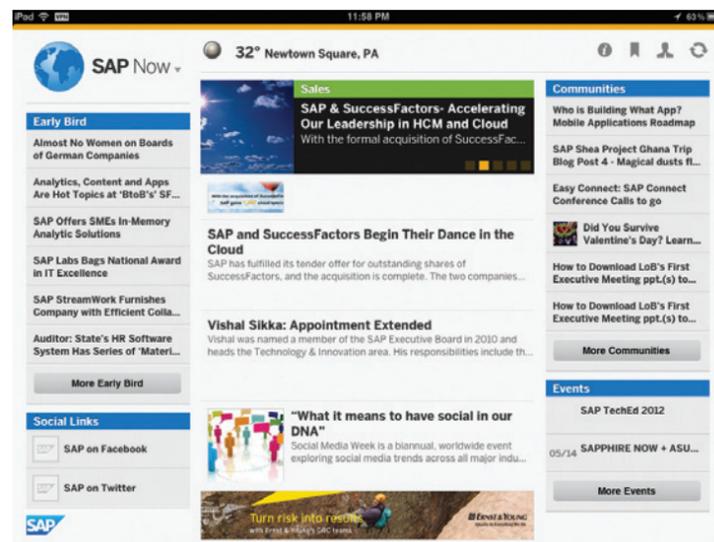


FIGURE 1 ▲ SAP's mobile corporate intranet app offers dynamic, consumer-app-like features

HR systems to present a global view of the geographical distribution of resources (see **Figure 2**), and also provides a "how-to-use" section with video tutorials to help first-time users fully understand the app's capabilities.

SAP Store Mobile App

This app provides mobile access to the SAP ecosystem to help you discover and buy relevant mobile business apps (see **Figure 3**). Although the app is primarily a catalog, it incorporates features like video and blog sections that provide information on

enterprise mobility and offer additional decision support and educational tools. The app also includes links to professional social networks, as well as collaboration capabilities.

Business apps of the future will provide engaging user experiences leveraging videos, communities, social media, and relevant content delivered and refreshed in real time to extend and enrich the core transactional capabilities of the app. The consumer-like experiences developed by SAP and its partners will make apps easier to use, free us from our desks, and increase productivity.



FIGURE 2 ▲ The iPeople app offers HR teams a global view of their workforce



FIGURE 3 ▲ The SAP Store mobile app makes discovering mobile business apps intuitive and engaging

Mobility presents businesses with opportunities to completely rethink their existing processes and create new business models.

Apps is the first app store launched by a vendor that features only business apps (see the “SAP Store for Mobile Apps: The One-Stop Shop” sidebar below). The SAP Store is the single destination where users can find all of the apps available within the SAP ecosystem across all the major mobile operating systems.

To get started, visit store.sap.com and select “Mobile Solutions.”

A Winning Strategy

Mobility is redefining the way we do business. Leading the way are apps that embody consumer-like user experiences, the emergence of specialized app stores that cater to the needs of a community and are relevant to the specific role of end users, and a platform that is secure, scalable, and allows for frequent release cycles. The mobility race is heating up. Let the games begin! ■

SAP Store for Mobile Apps: The One-Stop Shop

As the number of mobile apps developed by SAP and its partners in the ecosystem grows, how does the average SAP customer find the right one for its specific business needs? To address this challenge, SAP launched the SAP Store for Mobile Apps to make it easier for customers to find and buy business apps. At the same time, the SAP Store offers SAP’s mobile app developer ecosystem a scalable go-to-market channel that targets a business audience.

The concept is simple, yet very powerful. In the SAP Store, visitors can discover apps relevant to their industry or line-of-business needs across all devices and mobile operating systems. This makes it much easier for companies, especially those that have adopted a BYOD policy, to come to the one-stop shop to find and purchase mobile apps for their heterogeneous mobile device landscapes. To help buyers make more informed decisions, the SAP Store also offers a steady stream of content that educates them on the latest trends in enterprise mobility. Additionally, the SAP Store features customer testimonials, success stories, and app reviews.

Recognizing that companies have different purchasing requirements than individuals, the SAP Store offers multiple buying options ranging from using a credit card (similar to a consumer app store) to registering enterprise buyers who can avail the benefits, terms, and conditions already negotiated with SAP. Enterprise buyers are able to assign additional buyers within their company who can also purchase apps directly from the SAP Store.

Also, because enterprise apps must be integrated with back-end systems, a compatibility check needs to be performed prior to the point of sale to ensure that the mobile app is compatible with a customer’s back-end system. The SAP Store can perform these compatibility checks, which makes it easier for buyers to find apps that will work with their systems.

In addition to the SAP Store, there are a number of initiatives designed to help mobilize SAP’s two-million-member developer community and ecosystem of partners. For example, SAP Community Network features a mobile community area where developers can access technical assets, such as a free mobile development sandbox, complete with tools and software development kits, to become familiar with the SAP mobile platform. The Mobile Development Center gives developers and partners access to a private, cloud-based, mobile development platform environment, complete with back-end integration to SAP systems. Developers and partners can use this low-cost environment to develop and test their apps before submitting them to the SAP Store. Yet another initiative is the Idea Place on SAP Community Network, where independent developers and innovators come to post ideas for new apps. Developers can take these ideas and use the Mobile Development Center to develop apps that they can then sell and distribute via the SAP Store.