



A guide to mobilising your business

Mobilise, Organise, Connect... for a better business

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How mobile is your business?

You've probably heard a bit about wireless technology and mobile computing from the media and other business people using it.

You may be wondering what advantages these new technologies could have for you and your business. You probably have questions and concerns about what it takes to get mobile.

In fact, it's much easier than you might think.

In plain financial terms, small to mid-sized businesses often experience a positive return on investment (ROI) on mobility technology within a short time frame. The price of laptops and other mobile devices has steadily come down. Software has become more reliable, reducing the frequency of service calls and competitively priced wireless access is becoming easier to find.

The purpose of this guide is to show you how mobility – which we define here as the ability to access your office information remotely – can help businesses like yours work more productively.

There are 5 main sections:

1. Is mobility right for you?
2. Who's going mobile and why?
3. Getting started
4. Wired? Wireless? Or some of both?
5. Ways to connect and stay secure – putting it all together

1. Is mobility right for you?

Below is a checklist to help you decide if the time is right for you to mobilise your business. If you tick one or more items on the list, you may want to look into mobile technology in the near future.

- Do you spend more than 10% of your business hours calling on customers, associates or suppliers, attending off-site meetings, travelling or working at home?
- Do you have teams of representatives who work off-site part of the time?
- Does your business have multiple locations?
- Do you wish you could get more done when you're on the road?
- When you're away from the office and need information, do you call in and ask a staff member to look up a phone number, appointment information, driving directions or other data for you?
- Do you travel with a briefcase full of printed documents and files, just in case you need them?
- Can you access your files remotely or do you spend time emailing them to yourself and/or co-workers?

2. Who's going mobile and why?

Businesses of all kinds are finding that having mobile access to their information gives them a real competitive advantage. Many companies who have adopted mobile technology for one reason, like keeping better track of inventory, often discover other unexpected benefits, such as:

Increased productivity

When you give your mobile workers uninterrupted access to information, you greatly increase their productivity. Research has found workers can gain 8 to 12 hours per week when they use wireless networking.*

Less paperwork

A mobile connection means you can access centrally held files whenever you need them. Contracts, forms, even full-colour sales materials can be viewed, customised and printed on demand.

Faster turnaround times

Instant mobile access to essential business information can give you a competitive advantage. Credit applications, legal signoffs, even money transfers can happen in minutes, making it possible to do more business in less time.

Customer satisfaction

Mobile computing solutions can help you keep your commitments to customers, follow up on special requests and respond quickly and accurately to queries.

Better communication

Questions only you can answer are bound to come up when you're out of the office. Staying connected keeps everyone – staff, suppliers and customers – on the same page and able to make better business decisions.

Job satisfaction

Some companies have found that giving workers the freedom to control where and when they work can increase job satisfaction, reduce staff turnover and minimise the costs associated with retraining new employees.**

3. Getting started

The basic requirements of mobility are relatively few, so it's easy to make a start before you make a huge commitment. Sample the benefits by connecting your laptop or home computer to your office PC and network; the latest security innovations will help protect your data and your network.

1. Hardware

You'll need a laptop or home computer equipped with a modem, high-speed Internet connection or wireless card. Most new laptops come with one or more of these. You will also want a telephone cord or Ethernet cable and a spare battery.

2. Software

The latest versions of the tools and applications you already know can help you get up to speed fast and begin realising the productivity benefits of mobility right away. The latest software will also include the most advanced security features which will help protect your network from hackers and viruses.

3. Technology support

If you'd like to enable existing PCs with powerful mobility features – or completely upgrade – show your wish list to your technology provider and ask for a recommendation and price list. While you're there, find out how to synchronise files and folders between laptop and desktop PCs, for instant access wherever you roam. It'll help you decide if a wireless network and/or a server are right for your business.

4. Wired? Wireless? Or some of both?

Your business may already be pre-wired for a computer network. If that's the case, it might make sense to take advantage of the existing cabling.

If you don't already have a wired network or you plan to relocate your business in the near future, you may want to consider going wireless. A wireless network uses radio signals that transmit through walls, ceilings and floors to connect computers in different rooms. You can also use your wireless-equipped laptops outside the office at designated public hotspots (such as airports and cafés).

Wireless networks equipped with Ethernet ports can support both wireless and wired (Ethernet) connections. Most computers equipped with a wireless card can also plug into a cable-based network. As long as the access point is away from microwave ovens and office automation equipment (which may interfere with wireless radio signals), wireless networks are flexible, inexpensive and easy to install and maintain.

Even if you choose a wired solution, you may wish to install a wireless router as a convenience to clients, visitors, off-site workers and salespeople.

5. Ways to connect and stay secure – putting it all together

Developing a plan that meets your business's specific mobility needs doesn't have to be complicated or difficult. If you choose the software applications your staff already know and trust, there'll be a minimal learning curve. If you choose the latest versions of those applications, you can be sure that you're getting the best and most innovative mobility and security tools.

What you can't see: the operating system and network

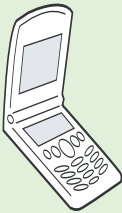
Build in speed, reliability and security with Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional as your operating platform and a network powered by Microsoft® Windows Small Business Server 2003. Their combined strengths give you a highly secure and robust wireless network which allows quick and easy connections either on-site or as you roam. Their reliability gives you the control to allow authorised personnel to access the network remotely, share data and exchange files, whether travelling, telecommuting or working off-site.

What you can see: the desktop

You'll hardly notice that familiar desktop applications are mobile-enabled and operating wirelessly. Microsoft® Office Small Business Edition 2003 can automatically synchronise your files, calendar and email each time you reconnect to your network. With Microsoft® Office Outlook® 2003 Web Access, you can use a web browser to access your Microsoft® Exchange Server 2003 mailbox from any computer with an Internet connection.

Here's an example of how you can use a mobile phone, a laptop and a public wireless network to connect to your files and your customers using the latest mobility-enabled software.

Microsoft mobile technologies work together to help support your business wherever you go.

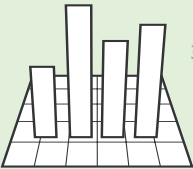


1. You've left the office for the airport.

You get a call in your car. An important client needs you to send them updated sales figures immediately, but the file is back at the office.

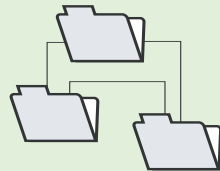


- 2. You find an Internet café.** You realise there's an easy solution. You find a place that offers a public wireless network and take out your laptop.



- 3. You remotely connect to your server at the office via the Internet.** You find the report and update the sales figures.

- 4. You email the new file to the client.** You post a backup copy on the office intranet.



5. You're on your way.

Your client receives the sales figures and you catch your flight.



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How it all connects together

Today's laptops make it easier than ever for you and your authorised users to connect to your email account, your calendar and company files. There are three types of Internet connections you may encounter:

1. Dial-up telephone line connections

The oldest form of connection, dial-up can be relied on if nothing else is available. Most laptops come equipped with modems and a phone line input, and recent Microsoft Windows operating systems have a 'new connection wizard' to help you access the Internet.

2. Broadband connections

Increasingly the connection of choice, broadband is significantly faster than dial-up and increasingly widely available at public access points. Simply connect your laptop's Ethernet port to the wall socket and your operating system should automatically recognise and configure the connection for you. If you want to access your desktop PC back at the office from any computer on the Internet, you can use the Remote Desktop Web Connection. Just enter a web address to securely connect and control your desktop computer remotely from inside your Internet browser software.

3. Wireless connections

Wireless connections to the Internet are almost as fast as typical broadband Internet connections, but have the flexibility of unhooking you from the wall. There are currently three commercial wireless technologies available to business users:

- **Wi-Fi**

The most widely used wireless technology uses a broadband connection and wireless base station to transmit signals to Wi-Fi enabled computers. Using laptops equipped with Wi-Fi cards or integrated Wi-Fi antennas, mobile workers can take advantage of public hotspots in airports and Internet cafés and remain connected and productive when they're on the road. Most base stations have a range of about 150 feet, so the broadcast area is rather limited.

- **GPRS (Cellular Internet)**

The most expensive of the three, Cellular Internet gives you the freedom to connect to the Internet anywhere the cellular service is available. It is easy to set up, requiring nothing more than a cellular-enabled PC card and computer.

- **Bluetooth**

This third wireless technology enables short-range wireless connections between various hardware devices. Operating on a radio frequency, Bluetooth eliminates the need to string wires between your office computers and your printers, keyboards, mice and other peripherals.

Tips for mobile travellers

If you've ever run out of battery power, forgotten to pack a high-speed Internet cable or wondered about security when you're on the road, you may appreciate this collection of tips from experienced mobile travellers.

Power-saving tips

1. Most batteries, even the newer lithiumion ones, will hold a charge for four or five hours at the most, so carrying a spare battery is a good idea.
2. When not in use, switch your laptop to standby or hibernate mode. You'll find the relevant controls in your Control Panel under Power Options.



Windows XP Professional supports a variety of power management options, providing users with the ability to choose the balance of battery life and performance that best meets their needs.

3. To extend battery life, eject any unnecessary PC cards, CDs or DVDs from your laptop and avoid listening to music on your computer while you work.

Security tips

1. Set a password via the Basic Input/Output System (BIOS) menu to keep others from booting up your laptop and accessing your files. Once activated, only the most persistent hacker can get in.
2. Lock out unauthorised users even when your computer is on, by configuring your user account to ask for a password each time your screensaver is activated.
3. Enable file encryption for individual files you want to protect from prying eyes. Using this feature, you can selectively protect your most sensitive information.

To encrypt a file or folder:

- Open Microsoft® Windows Explorer (located in the standard **Accessories** folder).
 - Right-click the file or folder that you want to encrypt and then click **Properties**
 - On the **General** tab, click **Advanced**
 - Select the **Encrypt contents to secure data** check box
4. Don't disclose passwords. Consider using a 'digital wallet' to protect super-sensitive information such as passwords, National Insurance number and credit card numbers.
 5. Set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN), which uses encryption and tunneling to eliminate the risk of hacking by transferring data securely over the Internet to a remote-access VPN server on your workplace network.

Version management tip

1. When files are being exchanged and modified by many people, version control can be a headache. Solve it with built-in automatic synchronisation tools, which can also manage email.

Preventing loss and theft

- Keep your bags near you at all times
- Buy and use luggage locks
- Use a cable lock system to secure your laptop when working off-site. Some lock systems come with motion sensors and alarms
- Use a nondescript, padded computer bag
- Make sure your name and contact information is in the case or on a sticker applied to your laptop
- Consider registering with a property return service which can help increase the odds of your lost bag being returned to you. For a small annual subscription fee you receive identifier tags for your equipment
- As part of company policy, set up a freephone number so the finder of any lost property can call and receive simple instructions on how to return them

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For more information on Microsoft Office visit:
www.microsoft.com/uk/office

Microsoft® bCentral™ – www.bcentral.co.uk

The definitive online resource for small businesses, Microsoft bCentral is a free comprehensive online destination offering you advice, ideas and support across a range of business areas.

* Source: Empowering Mobile PC Users: The Financial Benefits of Windows XP Professional and Office XP, Beaming Point, December 2002

** Source: European Telework Online, www.eto.org.uk

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