



Mobile Workforce

Improving Productivity, Improving Profitability

The Business Challenge

Between increasing operational cost, staff turnover, budget constraints and pressure to deliver products and services faster, today's operations managers need to act on opportunities quickly. It's no secret businesses need to regularly reinvent themselves to remain competitive and manage their profitability. So how can business managers increase their bottom line when they have limited funding to invest? What can they do to increase productivity or reduce operational costs? One simple and cost effective approach is to rethink business processes regarding data collection and paperwork. The closer one gets to real time updates of their operation, the better they can manage and improve productivity and profitability.

Traditional business processes in any service industry typically rely on paper-based forms for scheduling work, assigning jobs, inventory control, and ultimately to deliver products or services. A good deal of work is required to generate this information, manage it and distribute it to those who are operationalizing the work. There are costs to keying data into forms to be printed and distributed to staff. Then, you have the time to perform the operations, get signatures (where required) and key the completed information into the business system from the completed forms. Today this is an unnecessary delay to a business given the availability of affordable technologies.

Whether it is field service, shop floor or warehouse, the process of filling out paperwork and delivering that paperwork to be keyed into a business system has become an unnecessary and time consuming step.

Old practices:

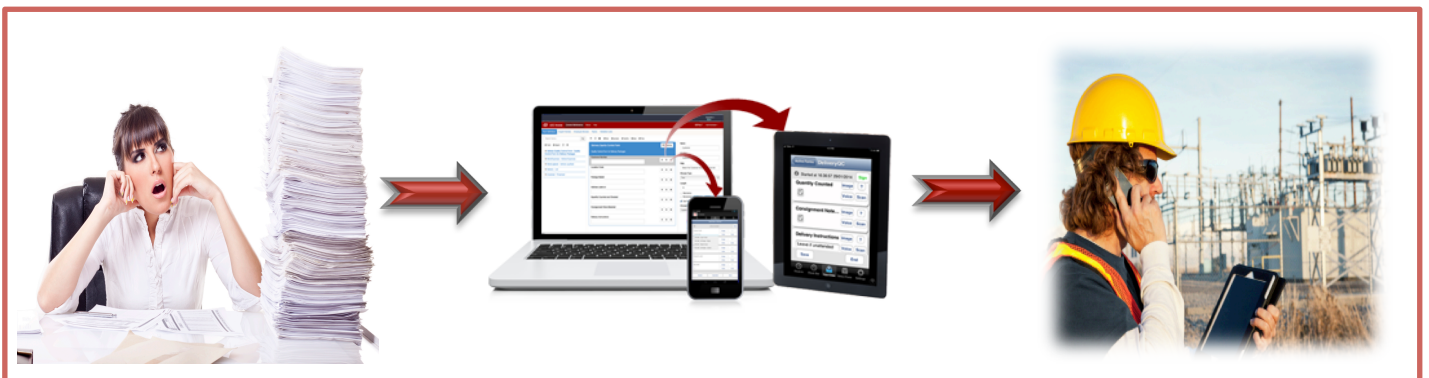
- Manual processes for paperwork
- Time to complete billing, information updates, etc.
- Timing of information to initiate billing
- Time correcting inventory levels
- Dispatching jobs to a mobile workforce

Associated costs:

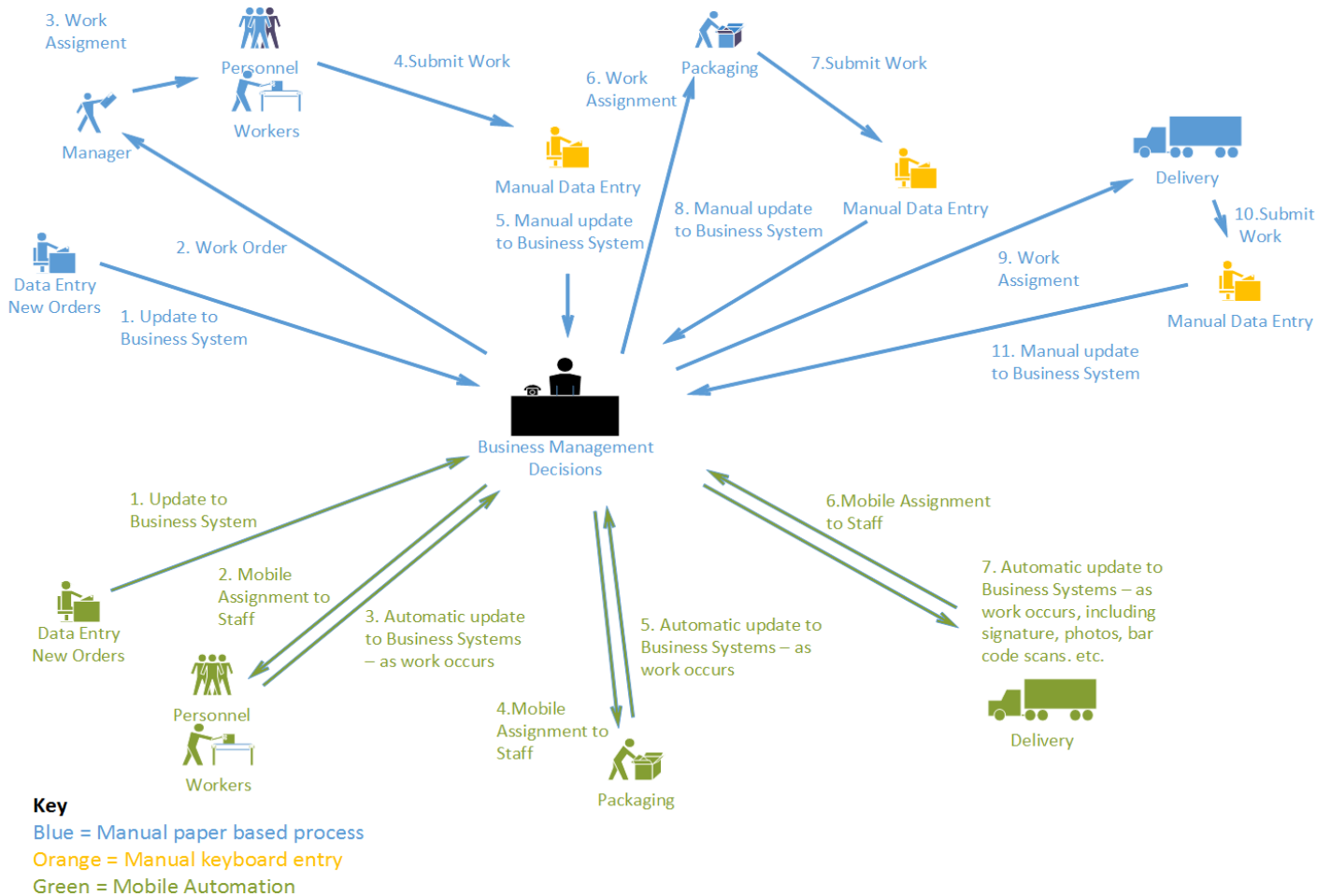
- Paper based client files, lookup and handling time
- Courier and postage costs
- Rekeying data
- Cost of forms and paper

Old practices result in time wasted for managers requiring an up-to-date business system. The insurance industry eliminated most paper filings decades ago. They scan and store their documents on digital media. The process efficiencies and cost reductions in eliminating paper handling were too attractive.

Multiply these steps over the course of a single job or project and the inefficiencies are a serious impediment to your business. Why not drive the data directly from the end point where the work is being conducted directly into your business system? Why not push the new or revised data back out to staff working on the coal face? Why wait?



Paper based Process versus Mobile Automation



In the diagram above we can see the standard practice of starting jobs and the paper based flow and delays related to distributing paper-based work orders, filling them out, returning the completed versions, which then ultimately have to be keyed into a business system. The result is delays and time wastage which impacts upon productivity and expense..

A Simple and Cost Effective Approach

Lets be clear, you can't just replace legacy systems. Continued support of legacy systems may be costly, however the capital costs and time to replace them can be even greater. There are cost effective approaches to improving your business processes that can be realized very quickly and can be integrated with your existing legacy systems. Remember, the cost of doing nothing is likely a step backwards relative to your competitors and your ever-rising operational costs. Utilizing mobile devices is one way to improve productivity and profitability.

An IBM global study¹ identified that mobile-savvy enterprises prioritizing mobile technology and making it a strategic IT imperative, are:

- Two times more likely than other organization to grow revenue by 10% or more a year.
- Four times more likely than others to benefit from increased customer interactions.
- Enjoying higher rates of employee responsiveness and productivity.
- Gaining strong returns on their mobility investments.
- Dramatically improving both customer service and customer satisfaction.

Employee Productivity

Effectively, real time information from your mobile staff or even staff in the warehouse or shop floor provides you with exact, up to the minute information on what the business is doing. Providing real time updates of their jobs, tasks, etc. only helps them from having to go to a computer to look it up or to stop at the office to retrieve the necessary paperwork. There is a real time-savings here as well as the business processing of their work.

Employee Satisfaction

Particularly if you implement a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach, your employees are using devices they have bought themselves. This has many benefits.

- They are not carrying a second device.
- They are familiar with its use and will not need training.
- They are likely to be happy with their device.
- The up front capital costs to implement your mobile business plan are effectively eliminated.
- It is convenient for them to integrate their personal and work lives.
- You can implement solutions today

Since it common practice for organizations to allow employee to use their smart phones to access their corporate email, why wouldn't they allow these same employees to provide job or activity data on that same device? Employees are generally keen to use their own devices and if it makes their work easier it becomes a welcome bonus to them. Whilst you could procure corporate devices for employees, you do not need to in order to implement improvements to your business processes, as employees are generally satisfied with their current device; after all, they bought it.

Security

If BYOD is implemented it can be challenging to secure the end point (devices) themselves given the number of types you may encounter. You must secure gateways and access points. Encryption is essential as

is control over remote wiping any corporate business data in the event of loss or theft. Any world-class mobile solution will support these functions. Lastly, consider implementing a Mobile Device Management system (MDM) as part of your mobility strategy.

Costs

There are many approaches to implementing mobile solutions. There are specialty apps that cater for SAP, Oracle and other enterprise ERP systems which are typically expensive and require a good deal of planning to implement. That could mean you have to wait until next fiscal year to budget for these solutions.

Most organizations don't have excess IT budget to implement new solutions in their current budget year. Consider a solution that is offered as a service rather than a license. Consider starting small and expanding only when the solution is proven. You don't have to create a big bang implementation trying to solve all problems. A savvy approach would be to implement a simple solution for one of your processes and evaluate its effectiveness. Focus on a team of individuals that are keen to prove the changes. Learn from the process and grow the solutions to incorporate additional processes.

Let's face it, the mobile era is here, whether its BYOD or employer provided devices. Business process improvements can be implemented securely and with minimum cost and effort.

UDC Mobile

UDC Systems, an industry expert in data collection solutions, would like to introduce UDC Mobile. The UDC Mobile solution incorporates an easy to implement cloud-based application that communicates directly with any business system. It requires no software installation on the organization's network and caters for Android and Apple operating systems for the mobile devices. The

**86% of
mobile
technology
leaders believe
that an external
provider can
help them
achieve their
mobility goals¹**

data entry is set up to match exactly the form and format of your existing paperwork and will collect any type of data the device supports such as bar codes, photos, audio files, signatures, GPS tracking and keyboard data entries. Enforcement of data entry from specific lists, such as customers, jobs, part numbers, etc. can be assigned to any field. Data collected is uploaded to your business system immediately, thereby keeping you on top of all business transactions and activities as they occur. Moreover any transaction collected can be sent to multiple business systems simultaneously.

You can dispatch jobs directly to field staff as new orders are created. Jobs or other pertinent data is sent directly to their mobile devices. This means there is no delay in dispatching new information to your staff.

If you want, you could customize your web portal to provide clients with electronic updates including signatures, transaction details, etc. as they occur from the data your staff has collected.

The good news is you don't have to replace your legacy systems to implement a mobile solution. The UDC Mobile solution is completely independent of other software vendors on the business system side as well as the mobile device end. It's responsible only for getting business data to your staff and returning their data to your business systems.

To find out more about UDC Mobile, go to www.udcsystems.com.au

Mobile Implementation

You can set up and run a cost free trial with UDC Mobile in less than a day.

- Run a simple trial with a small number of staff
- Set it up in an afternoon
- Measure the results across 2 weeks
- Measure employee satisfaction
- Expand the solution where it makes sense

Contact UDC Systems at info@udcsystems.com.au to setup the trial for you.

References

¹ *Putting Mobile First: best practices of mobile technology leaders* (2013). Findings from the IBM global IT study on mobile infrastructure.

Other sources of information

There are many studies in relation to mobility and it's impact on business productivity as well as how an organization should approach this technology. They can be referenced at independent research websites such as:

www.computerworld.com/s/whitepapers/1
www.idc.com
www.forrester.com/Enterprise-Mobility
www.gartner.com
www.accellion.com/resources

The following is an example of how mobility revolutionizes how we think and work:

http://h30458.www3.hp.com/us/us/ent/a-vision-that-helps-mobile-enterprise-solutions-for-aerospace-take-flight_1329367.html