[Engaging Your Employees Through Mobile Technology Can Boost Productivity](#)

Employee engagement can be fickle. There are times when your employees are effective and contributing members of the organization and other times when they struggle or fall flat. Those ebbs and flows in performance among individuals and teams can happen whether employees are generally fully engaged or not. However, there is both anecdotal and empirical evidence that supports the idea that, 1 – more fully engaged employees and, 2 – organizations who recognize the need for engagement and take steps to demonstrate to their employees that engagement matters, do consistently outperform organizations.

Over the past few years, according to often-cited data from research organization Gallup, the majority of employees in most North American workplaces are not really engaged at work. In Gallup Chairman, Jim Clifton's 2011 book 'The Coming Jobs War' he talked extensively about Gallup's research that pointed to the value of employee engagement in organizational success. Gallup estimates that a lack of employee engagement costs organizations almost 1/3 for every $10,000 in annual salary in lost productivity and opportunity. Imagine if you would regain some of that lost productivity by using mobile technology to increase your employees' productivity. Apparently there is more evidence that you can.

Mobile Adapting Organizations = Engaged Employees?

It is not easy to always pinpoint what it is that contributes to a lack of employee engagement. There are many factors cited that can improve employee engagement including providing to employees transparency around organizational goals, leadership that delivers two-way communication with employees, demonstrating trust by empowering employees and generally demonstrating that employees are valued and more. Recently there was a study by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) that found an interesting link between an organization's use of technology and employee engagement.

In the study "[Mobility, Performance and Engagement: How CIOs can contribute to business performance by shaping the employee experience](#)", sponsored by Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise company, a measurable link was found between a mobile-first work environment and increased employee engagement. This link between mobility has previously been identified at playing a positive role in increasing customer engagement, so it is logical that it would also have an impact on employee engagement.

In this survey of 1,865 employees globally the employees who rated their organizations as "pioneers" with respect to mobile enablement demonstrated a 16% increase in productivity, 18% in creativity, 23% in satisfaction and 12% loyalty compared to companies that ranked poorly regarding supporting mobile technology.

By definition an engaged employee spends more time focused on delivering work and when delivering that work is productive. A 16% increase in productivity can translate into the equivalent of an additional 6 hours of work per week (based on a 37.5 hour work week), which equates to a potential for 312 hours more productivity or an additional 8 weeks of productivity per employee per year.

Early Technology Adopters = More Productivity

The EIU survey did not only report this increased engagement among Millennial employees, the increase in engagement was found consistently across all age groups from 18-65. The differences that were found were not related to age but to whether or not the employee considered him/herself as an early adopter of mobile technology. In other words, early technology adopters became more productive, possibly because they became more proficient with the technology and this enabled them to be more efficient and, therefore, more productive. These early technology adopters also rated themselves as more satisfied, creative and loyal.

A result to take note of was that these more productive, satisfied, creative and loyal employees were also more demanding and had higher standards with regards to their technology expectations and needs. A take away from this is that listening to their concerns is a window into the concerns that other employees will express down the road when they begin to catch up on their technology adaptation.

The Practices and Policies That Had a Positive Impact

A Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) is only one element of a 'mobility' work environment. Among the more productive technology adapters they identified several policies and procedures that their companies offered:

1. IT support for a personal mobile device for IT technical issues that impact work
2. Access to a mobile communication app such as WhatsApp for work
3. Non desk-based working areas to work from
4. Mobile device that can be used within the workspace
5. Provide an opportunity to switch off notifications from work systems
6. Ensures all company applications can be easily used from mobile devices
7. Cloud document hosting services like Dropbox for work
8. Mobile and home Internet paid for by employers
9. Training on how to use mobile devices to collaborate more effectively

These results can be summed up in 3 strategies to increase productivity through a mobile work environment:

- **Working anywhere, anytime:** 49% of respondents identified a flexible work structure as having the most impact on their productivity. 29% indicated workplace flexibility was the most significant factor contributing to employer loyalty.
- **Technology Collaboration:** With regards to creativity, the ability to collaborate via technology was rated by 38% as the most important factor affecting their creativity.
- **Mobile information access:** Rapid access to mobile information was identified by 42% of employees as contributing to more productivity.

Effective use of mobile technology boosts production in many ways. A competitive advantage can be gained by organizations that offer faster and reliable technology, allowing employees to work efficiently. However, another gain comes when the organization appears to employees as a pioneer, someone who is future looking and appears ready to be competitive, perhaps communicating confidence in the organization's ability to adapt. Finally, productivity can be boosted when organizations show respect for their employees' time by enabling them to work in a flexible work structure that allows them to be productive when and where they want and need.