

# Creating Business Value with Wirelessly Enabled Business Processes

*A mobileOne P.Ltd White Paper*

## **Now is the time to go mobile.**

In recent years, many of the barriers to adding real-time mobility to business processes have been removed: more security features are available, networks are increasingly robust, and mobile devices are both full-featured and driven by industry standards. At the same time, the market is poised for mass adoption.

The key to adding real-time wireless mobility is not killer apps, but rather killer business processes. It is in key business processes that mobile applications create fundamental value. This may be soft value, such as improved customer satisfaction, or it may be quantifiable value, such as increased revenue or reduced costs. Either way, a number of leading businesses are demonstrating that mobilizing processes can generate measurable, provable returns.

Going mobile is also a powerful way for a company to gain competitive advantage. Many of yesterday's early adopters have become today's feared market leaders, as they use mobility to build capabilities that further separate themselves from those that have been slow to the game. Companies that put off adopting mobile applications risk seeing the gap between them and the dominant players in their markets become virtually insurmountable.

These are just some of the overall insights generated by research jointly conducted by mobileOne P.Ltd.

This research was inspired by a series of urgent questions that many companies now are asking about mobile technology, including:

- What business functions are most likely to benefit from real-time wireless data?
- When is the right time to mobilize business functions? Is it now?
- What are the proven, measurable benefits of going mobile?
- Given the complex business ecosystem we work in, how are mobile projects implemented?

To answer these pressing questions, mobileOne P.Ltd reviewed more than 40 production deployments of real-time wireless technology and interviewed executives at 25 companies about their experiences with wireless solutions. We then identified and prioritized the top business processes for mobile implementation, and examined mobility's total cost of ownership (including both hard and soft benefits).

## Mobility Generates Business Value

Among the findings of our research, one common theme stood out: At the most fundamental level, mobility can dramatically improve a company's operations by bridging a growing gap between on-site employees and remote employees, assets and inventories. Traditional on-site employees enjoy real-time access to enterprise data, which leads to higher productivity, greater efficiency, and improved agility. However, companies are increasingly becoming less traditional. More than ever, employees, assets and inventories are located in remote locations, disconnected from the main office's people and systems.

Between them sits the gap that mobility can help close and, in the process, generate measurable business benefits.

How? To start, mobility can provide **access to information at the point of need and in real time**. Real-time wireless solutions enable mobile employees to access and update information at the point of need. This can control costs by reducing both the number of trips made to the main office and the number of back-office staff needed to answer calls from mobile employees.

Second, mobility **enhances the connections among dispersed employees, products, assets and customers**. Real-time wireless data capability links mobile employees to both their main office and each other. As a result, employee activities in the field can be scheduled and coordinated in real time. This, in turn, can reduce downtime, produce predictable workforce requirements, cut overtime and improve productivity.

Finally, mobility enables faster, more effective response to change. Real-time mobility gives employees wireless access to company and customer data. This helps them to learn about changes quickly and effectively – then respond to these changes with new, higher levels of speed and effectiveness. As a result, their organizations can save money and become more competitive.

### More Key Findings

As part of our research project, we asked executives at 25 companies what benefits they either experienced or expected from wireless enablement. The eight top benefits, along with the percentage of executives who said they've either experienced or expect them, are:

- 1) Increased productivity: 64 percent
- 2) Reduced costs: 52 percent
- 3) Improved customer satisfaction: 28 percent
- 4) Reduced staff: 20 percent
- 5) Increased employee retention: 16 percent
- 6) Improved data quality: 16 percent
- 7) Differentiated company: 8 percent
- 8) Increased revenue: 8 percent

## Other insights that emerged from our research include the following:

- **Productivity** is the single most significant value driver of real-time mobility projects because it leads to hard, financial benefits. For example, field force productivity gains can help to reduce costs. Sales force productivity gains can help to increase revenue.
- **Schedule and dispatch processes** are the easiest to justify because they produce measurable, hard benefits. This makes them ideal processes for launching a mobility effort. Additional implementations of real-time mobility can then build upon the foundation provided by these initial processes.
- **Fewer indirect expenses** can contribute to significant cost savings. For example, adding real-time mobility to the sales force can reduce the number of calls that sales personnel make to the support desk.
- **Reduced travel expenses** are frequently overlooked but should not be. While this may seem like “small stuff,” reduced travel can add up to large, measurable benefits.
- **Soft benefits matter**, too. These include customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and projecting a professional image. In fact, soft benefits may be sufficient to justify an initial pilot of a real-time mobility solution. After the pilot becomes established, then the hard benefits can be identified and measured.

## A Fourfold Path

Understanding the fundamental value drivers of real-time mobility is an important first step. The next step is to identify specific business processes where an organization can capture value. The return on investment for wireless data solutions is often found in streamlining business processes.

In fact, when adding real-time mobility to existing business processes, the careful selection of business-process type is vital. We have discovered that four types of business processes are best for real-time mobilization. Like the floors of a multi-story building, these process types start with a foundation and then build upon that foundation.

**Workflow enhancers** are the foundations of mobility. They demonstrate a clear, hard business case for being mobilized in stand-alone fashion and do not depend on other business processes being mobilized before they can demonstrate added value. All mobility newcomers should begin their efforts with one or more workflow-enhancing processes. Examples of workflow enhancers include creating, reviewing and updating work orders; workforce scheduling and dispatch; sales order quote and commit; and law-office or physician-office personal information access.

### WORKFLOW ENHANCERS

Real-time enablement of core, customer-facing processes

- Work order create, review, update
- Workforce scheduling and dispatch
- Sales order quote and commit
- Personal information access



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The next building blocks are **Knowledge enhancers** – processes that demonstrate the most business value when they are paired with the foundation built by a workflow enhancer. That is, while they can be mobilized as a stand-alone process, they will deliver the greatest value when combined with a workflow enhancer. Knowledge enhancers include mobile inventory; asset tracking and monitoring; knowledge-base lookup; and on-site inventory for retail outlets, warehouses, and other stationary locations.

#### KNOWLEDGE ENHANCERS

Real-time access to tracking and information that supports workflow

- Mobile inventory
- Asset tracking and monitoring
- Knowledge-base lookup
- On-site inventory



Above knowledge enhancers are **Transaction enhancers** such as data capture, alerting and response, and printing. By adding real-time wireless to these processes, a company can squeeze additional functionality out of other processes – typically a workflow enhancer.

These processes may not be the best place to begin adding mobile technology. But they definitely offer an opportunity for further value after the foundation has been laid.

#### REPORTING ENHANCERS

Real-time capability to perform analysis to improve decision making

- Sales Pipeline
- Time and Expense
- Account and Contact Management
- Executive Dashboard



Finally, **Reporting enhancers** are those processes that can add value to an organization if made mobile, but are generally applicable only in specific industry segments and applications. Such processes include sales pipeline management, time and expense monitoring, account and contact management, and executive dashboard.

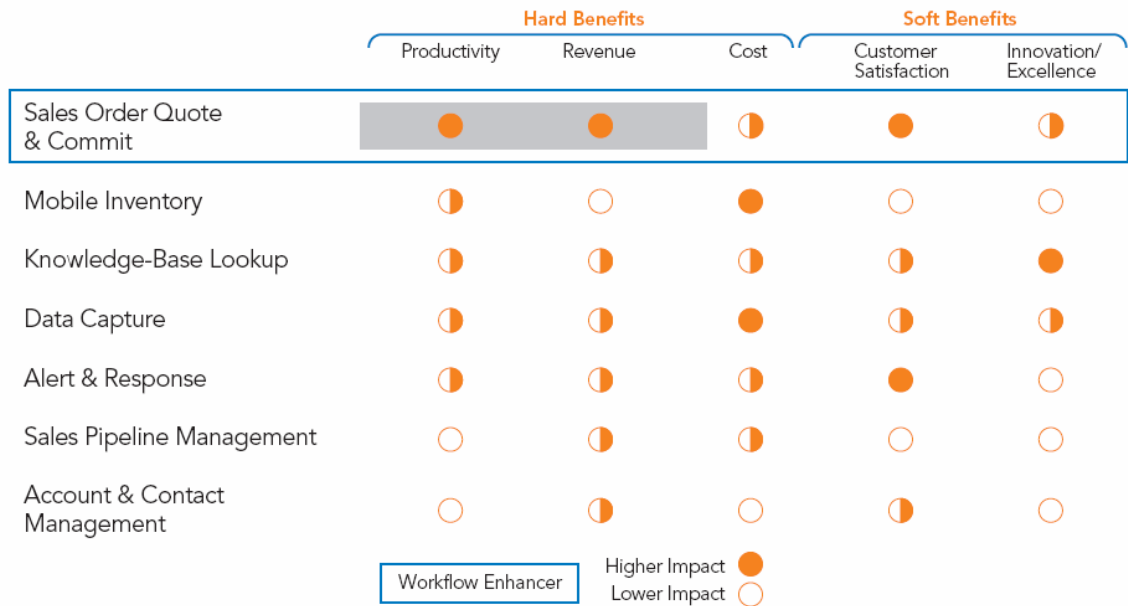
## A Deeper Look: Sales Force Automation and Field Service Automation

To understand how this fourfold path to mobility can deliver true business value, let's look at two specific examples: sales force automation (SFA) and field service automation (FSA).

For SFA, sales order quote and commit is the workflow enhancing process on which other rollouts can be based. What's more, adding real-time mobility to SFA can increase the productivity of sales personnel, which should in turn increase revenue. As is illustrated in Figure 1, other SFA business processes deliver fewer hard or soft benefits, making them unsuitable as the first process for a real-time mobility project. Later, they can add value by augmenting the workflow enhancer.

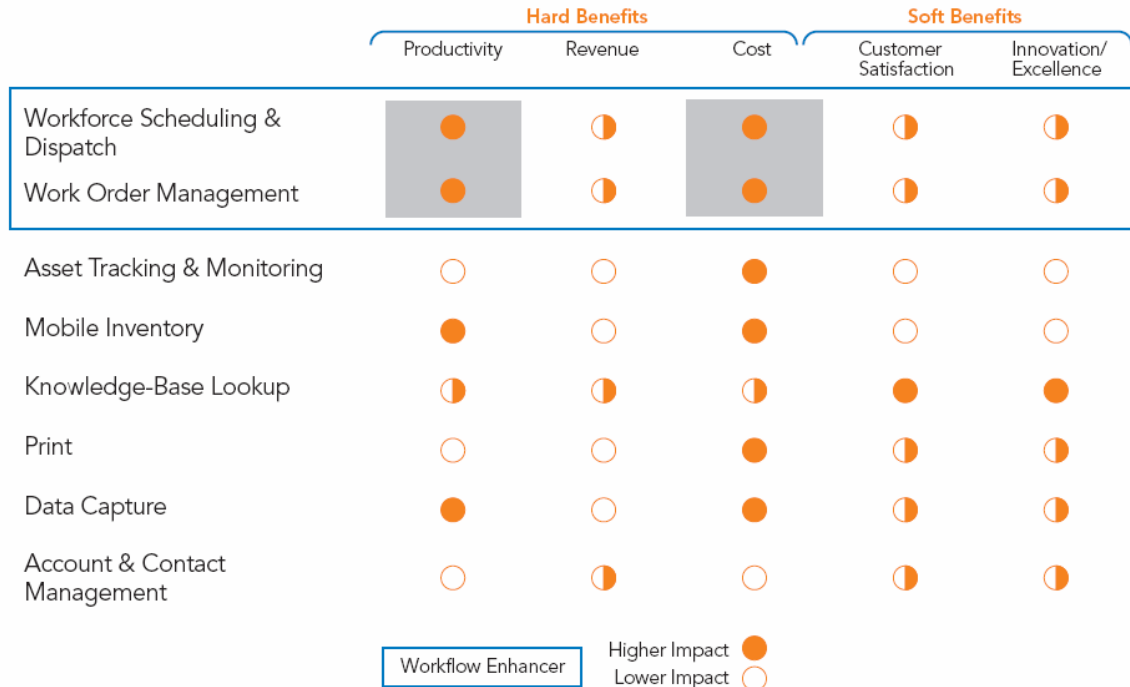
Turning now to Field Service Automation, two business processes emerge as workflow enhancers that are appropriate as the first, value-driving implementation of real-time mobility. They are workforce scheduling and dispatch and creating, reviewing and updating work orders. Again, as Figure 2 illustrates, other field service processes deliver less value, either hard or soft, when mobilized. As such, they can be mobilized after either of the workflow enhancers are implemented to augment the value those processes deliver.

**Figure 1**  
Mobility Benefits in Sales Force Automation<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 2**

Mobility Benefits in Field Service Automation'



In both the sales force and field service cases, it is important to distinguish between hard and soft benefits. Hard benefits relate to finances, and typically involve improved productivity, revenue, or profit, or reduced costs. They are fact-driven and relatively straightforward to measure, making them ideal “value levers” to get approval for real-time mobility projects. By contrast, soft benefits are “people-related”, including improved customer satisfaction, improved employee satisfaction and projecting a professional image.

Because these are more difficult to measure, they offer a less-than-compelling justification for mobility projects over the long term. However, as previously mentioned, the promise of soft benefits can be sufficient to justify early pilot projects.

### More About Workflow Enhancers

Because workflow enhancers are so important to getting started with real-time mobility, let’s look at two in-depth examples of workflow enhancing processes that can benefit from real-time mobility: work order create, review, update and sales order quote and commit.

#### Work order create, review, update

This is the process of managing the creation, receipt, and updating of work orders while in the field. Examples of work orders include trouble tickets, assignment sheets and insurance claims. Common work order management applications are provided by mobileOne P.Ltd.

Work order management is an important function for many industries, especially utilities, telecom, construction, high-tech manufacturing and insurance. The process typically begins once a customer either places an order or reports an issue. At that time, a work order is created in the system and assigned to a field technician, claims adjuster or driver. The field employee then travels to the customer site to resolve the issue or gather initial information.

If the issue cannot be resolved in the first visit, then the field worker returns to the office to locate a part, gather data or do whatever else is needed to solve the customer's problem.

Once the field employee completes the work order, he or she must call or return to the office to close or update the work order. Even if a trip is unnecessary, paperwork is often required to document the order completion. Employees in the back office must then manually close the order and update the system – hours, even days, later.

With wireless mobility, work order management can be streamlined dramatically. Field employees, instead of returning to the office or calling, can access product information or locate a part wirelessly at the work site. They no longer need to call into or travel to the office to update work orders; instead, they can simply send updates via a wireless device. Also, when wireless solutions eliminate the need to transfer information from one person to the next during a status call, the chances for error, as well as the time needed to complete a work item, are reduced. The possibility of information becoming lost or disassociated if the field employee must travel to multiple sites is also significantly lessened. Ultimately, wireless mobility should increase the number of work items completed because field agents are able to do more work in a day.

Wireless data capability can further unlock the value of work order information by optimizing activities across multiple field employees and customer locations. When work-order status is available to the central office in real time, the company can schedule and dispatch field employees more efficiently.

#### Sales order quote and commit

This is the process of gathering customer information, creating a quote or placing an order for a product or service. It includes checking availability, pricing and inventory commitment for the order.

Without wireless technology, the sales order process typically begins when a customer requests a price quote. The sales representative then confirms the price, availability, configuration, SKU, lead time, location, quality and many other parameters of the product or service. Often, this requires him to make multiple phone calls or trips back to the office.

Once the sales rep has provided the quote – and assuming the customer agrees to make the purchase – the sales representative then captures the order details and submits the order for processing. In many cases, he also must re-enter the information into a system at the office. If all the information is entered correctly, then inventory is committed for the order; however, if any information is missing, inaccurate or obsolete, the sales representative must take more time to update the form – contacting the customer if necessary – and then re-submit the order.

By contrast, adding real-time mobility can greatly streamline the sales order process. First, giving sales reps wireless access to real-time information means they can review a customer's credit status, status of last order and outstanding issues. They also can immediately answer the customer's questions on pricing, inventory and delivery times. The sales reps further can use wireless technology to draft an instant quote based on up-to-the-minute information, thus eliminating the need for trips to and from both the office and the customer's site.

Additional streamlining can result from using form validation to enable sales representatives to capture an order at the customer site. This can reduce the chances for error and eliminate re-work and back-office input of sales information. Adding wireless solutions that speed up the sales-order process also gives sales reps more time to make sales calls, which can lead to more revenue from a wider group of customers. Finally, real-time sales order management also can reduce costs at the distribution center or warehouse. Because logistics managers receive customer orders in real time as they are entered, they can avoid overtime and optimize inventory levels and product flows.

### Implementation Insights

As part of a research, Accenture and Cingular studied the best practices of organizations implementing real-time mobility. Analyses of these best practices revealed several key insights, which should be helpful to any organization embarking on realtime mobility for business processes:

**Evolution, not revolution:** Adding real-time, wireless mobility to business processes is a long-term process. Leading companies first start with a workflow enhancer that can deliver measurable benefits and then expand to other processes that have fewer hard benefits and more soft benefits and build upon those benefits already generated by the workflow enhancing process.

**The human factor:** Users get emotionally attached to their mobile devices in ways they don't with office-bound, non-mobile equipment. Cell phones, PDAs and other mobile devices seem to tap into deep human needs for status and respect – even power and control. For this reason, the evaluation and selection of mobile devices becomes much more important than it is for non-mobile office applications.

**Early-mover advantage:** Organizations that boldly implement wireless solutions went on to become feared by their competitors. Progressive Insurance, UPS and FedEx are examples of highly competitive companies that innovated early – often using soft business benefits to justify early pilots.

**Getting secure around security:** Formerly a deployment blocker, security concerns have lessened as organizations gain experience with wireless devices and realized the enhanced security features of new wireless solutions. That's not to say that security concerns have become a non-issue. Wireless security remains top-of-mind, but successful implementations of robust wireless solutions can address these concerns without blocking deployment.

**Values matter:** Business units and IT departments typically have different reasons for implementing real-time mobility. Successful projects unite these two groups by focusing their efforts on the joint goal of improving an existing business process.

## Pulling It All Together

Real-time wireless value drivers, business processes and implementation insights come together in real-life wireless deployments we analyzed as part of the study.

**Field Service Automation Case Study** – Unlocking the Value of a Work Order. A large electric and gas utility with over 10,000 employees and 500,000 customers found itself drowning in paper due to the required transcription of work order data into a customer database. With a real-time wireless solution, technicians can now download work orders as they are created and upload completed job information from the customer's site; fewer clerical staff are required and the paper-based system was eliminated.

The "hard" benefits are substantial – travel time and expense per field technician were reduced; time to repair and first-time fix ratios are improving. The company can respond faster to customer requests and emergencies.

Implementation of workflow enhancers – workforce scheduling and dispatch and work order create, review, update unlocked the value of paper-based information; now the company has the infrastructure to explore further benefits of real-time wireless and consider additional processes for wireless enablement.

Wireless security was a concern, but not a deployment blocker. The company implemented a private connection between its wired network and the wireless network and is sending data securely via network VPN.

## Practical Next Steps

Organizations eager to embark on real-time mobility projects should first clarify their business goals, measures of success, and core competencies. To begin creating a mobile strategy for enterprise processes, companies should ask – and begin to answer – the following questions:

- **Goals:** What business objectives can we realistically achieve by adding real-time mobility to a specific business process? And when are we likely to achieve it?
- **Processes:** Which of the organization's core processes drive value for our customers? Which are the highest-priority processes for a real-time mobility project? How can these processes be improved with real-time mobility?
- **Drivers:** Looking at each of these business processes, what drives business value, either for the organization, its customers or both?
- **Technical specs:** What is the technical architecture needed for this wireless deployment? What are all the components needed for success? And how can the organization take the fullest advantage of its existing infrastructure and technical standards?
- **Human touch:** How will the organization deal with human factors to drive the adoption of real-time mobility through the enterprise?
- **Solution Providers:** How will the organization select a solution provider for implementation that can accelerate the solution's development while minimizing the organization's ongoing total cost of ownership?

There's no question that the time is right for companies to begin embracing real-time wireless data solutions. As our research has revealed, pioneering companies are already reaping sound financial and competitive benefits from their early adoption of mobility applications, and are rapidly increasing their lead over slow-moving competitors. The key to generating business value from mobility is to target the right business processes, carefully choosing those that stand to improve the most from mobility enablement. While the "right" processes will no doubt vary from company to company – and even industry to industry – a focused, thoughtful approach will help a company's mobility initiatives to generate the operational improvements necessary to compete in today's uncertain economy.