



Mobile Workforce Management Solutions: Apps, Telematics or Cloud

How do you pick the right mobile workforce management solution for your business?

Over 30% of all workers in the US as well as internationally spend more time doing business on their mobile devices out of the office as opposed to sitting at a desk—or some 60 million people in the US, and growing rapidly. While this trend has brought about new challenges to businesses to manage their growing mobile workforce, it also presents a new opportunity for businesses to increase revenues by improving productivity and saving payroll expenses by tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars.

However, navigating through the maze of solutions beings offered today is proving to be a significant challenge for small businesses as well as large enterprises. Further complicating decision making are privacy and data security issues, new HR practices and device management policies such as “Bring Your Own Device”.

Most solutions that are available in the market today provide the general capability to track the mobile employee or resource by their location, track job start and finish times, a visualization tool to manage resources, provide routing guidance to improve efficiency, enable communication with their mobile resource, provide analytics and reports to manage this process and finally enable back-end integration to payroll and ERP systems to automate their workflow.

So how does a business go about picking the right solution for their needs? First, let us look at mobile workforce management solutions available today and separate them into three classes of solutions (Fig. 1):

1. Black-box or Telematics based solution which requires installation of an in-cab “black-box” device to provide GPS tracking, navigation and tap into engine data such as odometer readings. The data from the device is delivered to a SaaS or SaaS like website over a cellular network. This type of service is typically used to track and manage fleets and not mobile workforce.
2. Smart phone Apps for Employees where apps are deployed on the GPS-equipped smart phone. Note that the phone used here could be the employees phone or a phone provided by the business. Here again capabilities such as GPS tracking, onsite job form fills etc. The back-end is typically a SaaS platform website which helps visualize tracking data (Fig. 2), setup business rules for geofencing alerts, view reports etc.
3. Newest class of mobile workforce management solution which is “cloud” based. The solution requires no apps or setup on the end user’s phone. It relies on the carrier’s E911 infrastructure to provide GPS or cell-based location information. The end-user is provided



FIGURE 1: MOBILE WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

	Telematics	Apps	Cloud
Any Phone	--		
Supports BYOD	--		
Optimized Battery Consumption	on-board power source	 *	
No Installation/Setup Required			
No Training Required for End User			
No Phone Memory			
No Data Plan			
On Demand Locate, Autotrack			
Geofencing			
Rules Engine			
Reports			
Voice Response Feature			
Enterprise Messaging			
Fine-Grained Privacy Controls			
Web API			
Low Total Cost of Ownership			

** myGeotracking provides both cloud and app based solution

*myGeotracking app is optimized for battery usage

strong privacy controls to ensure compliance with operator requirements. The service typically provides all the management features via a SaaS hosted web console and requires zero-touch on the end-user's side.

In order to pick the right solution, businesses need to figure out what their needs are. Based on our understanding of the market, here are some critical issues that businesses ought to consider while they make the all important decision of picking a solution for their mobile workforce management needs:

- Fast and easy deployment, with negligible setup time and cost on the front-end
- Scalability, going from tens to hundreds to thousands of mobile workers seamlessly
- A solid web Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platform that supports business needs such as scheduling, alerts, messaging and reports

- Flexibility to manage an ever changing workforce where contract employees or new mobile resources can be added as and when needed
- Fine-grained privacy controls
- An interface/API for integration with their payroll and ERP systems on the back-end

Summary

New developments where solutions enable employees to use their own devices not only reduces cost but also improves ease of deployment and provides the scalability and flexibility that businesses need. The timing has never been better for businesses to explore new solutions and gain competitive advantage by making improvements to their mobile workforce management.

FIGURE 2: DATA VISUALIZATION

