CUT COSTS AND BOOST PRODUCTIVITY

Mobile device selection for businesses

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1. Striving for Productivity

As businesses and organisations strive to increase productivity, the role of technology and the way we use it becomes increasingly important.

We're using more devices than we ever did – and we're operating them both at work, and away from the workplace. Independent research shows an increasing reliance on mobile devices, more remote working and a greater flexibility in work patterns.

Research by CCS Insights demonstrates the changing face of work. It's being driven by millennials, who on average are using at least five devices each. Mobility is key: 40 percent of employees work more than three hours a day on mobile devices. Other studies by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) suggest that by next year more than half of all staff will work remotely. Research by HSBC suggests that 89 percent of businesses believe that flexible working is the key to productivity improvements.

With such a changing work environment, it's critically important to ensure that your business chooses the right device strategy to enable your workforce to be most efficient and cost-effective, wherever and however they work.

With this in mind, we have designed this guide to help think through the various challenges of mobilising your workforce, and to come up with the most successful approach.

We offer here a clear, logical and systematic analysis. It will help you to give your people the tools they need, while reducing costs and boosting productivity. Our approach here will help you to analyse different users' needs and measure them against your budget. It will also enable you to purchase in the most effective way and manage your device downtime strategy. We also consider the operating systems and software that will help with your productivity, the specifications of your hardware including battery life and screen types, as well as enhancements that will make your team more effective.

As the real-life examples throughout this paper show, this is an approach grounded in business reality. What's more, it's backed up by a track record of demonstrable success and measurable benefits.

We have included useful templates, downloads and checklists in this guide to help you choose the most effective mobile devices for your organisation, and improve employees' productivity, wherever they work.

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1.1 Case study

EASTERN FORKLIFT TRUCKS LTD

By working through a similar device selection process to the one outlined in this guide, forklift specialist, ***Eastern Forklift Trucks Ltd***. witnessed clear productivity gains.

By mapping out their users' needs and working environments, defining a clear budget, and choosing a supplier that was able to identify exact and necessary device specifications, the East Anglian-based company experienced an uplift in productivity. They deployed durable tablets to their engineers who were completing forklift servicing and transactions remotely.

> Benefits have included an improved ability to keep more plates spinning without losing track, and a significantly greater vision of where we can better control our costs.
>
> Jon Hall, IT Consultant Director, Eastern Forklift Trucks LTD.

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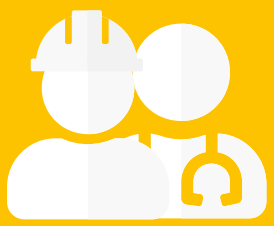

2. Identifying your company's user types

It's all about the user. When it comes to deploying your mobile devices effectively and efficiently, the role of the user is more important than the specification of a device. Assessing the needs of your business, and the needs of the individual, and mapping use cases for them will allow you to most effectively match the equipment to the need.

2.1 What type of users?

Firstly identify your type of users.

The easiest way to do this is to match the way people use their technology and then match that with the job roles they carry out. This will allow your IT function to purchase the right equipment and often the software set up for your user. We categorise users into six types.

- Fixed
- Flexible
- On their feet
- Mobile office
- Professional rugged
- Fully rugged

Fixed

Those who work at a desk, with little or no need to be mobile.

David's working day is primarily spent at his desk, surrounded by his team, working with a desktop and a phone. There is little requirement for him to work anywhere except the office. However, he will occasionally meet clients in the city for important meetings. For such occasions, he will be loaned a company laptop for the day.

Flexible

Those who have a desktop but also work remotely sometimes. This may be on-site or visiting clients, or just working from home. Their need is for an occasional mobile solution.

Sara is an interior designer who sometimes works remotely from home but also visits clients. She requires a precision stylus for drawing, a high-resolution, large screen for proofing, plus a good quality camera. She prefers a device with some protection as some of her clients are on building sites or in the process of renovating, where knocks and drops are common.

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On their feet

Those who probably have a desk but are perpetually on their feet. This could be in a warehouse or retail environment, scanning, stocktaking, or dealing with customers.

Anna works in the warehouse as a pick and packer. Her role involves scanning items and then packing them into boxes. She uses her tough mobile device for stock control on the warehouse floor, and for receiving and completing job sheets at her nearby workstation. It's important that the device she uses is handheld, light and includes a hand strap to avoid repetitive strain injury.

Mobile Office

Those who are on the road or persistently away from the office. They need full computing power on the move whether it's on the bonnet of the car, with a client, or in a coffee shop.

Jay works in Sales and is constantly on the road. He uses his tablet to receive emails from the office, record data and for customers to interact with. Jay needs to be able to work from any surface, sometimes a car bonnet – so he needs his device to be sturdy. Because Jay is mostly mobile, device run time and reliability is key, therefore he might consider a laptop or tablet that has more protection than a standard consumer device.

Professional Rugged

First-line responders - those who are out on the road in all conditions and often difficult environments. They could be any one of a wide range of job roles: engineers, delivery drivers, midwives, police or security.

Mo works track-side on the railway in all environments including freezing temperatures, extremely hot conditions, rain, snow or shine. His role entails reporting dangers and hazards, risk assessments and logging jobs for his team. Mo rarely enters the office and has jobs sent directly to his rugged mobile device. Mo needs a device whose screen is big enough to view his software, but light enough to hold all day.

Fully Rugged

Those who work in the ultimate challenging environment. Their devices could be exposed to dust, water, or adverse weather. Whatever the environment, access to the equipment is still essential.

Andy operates diggers in a quarry. He needs a strong, durable device for use in site inspections and job reports. Ingress protection is essential because of the risk of dust, dirt and constant exposure to the elements. A good battery is key because the isolated quarry requires offline working and offers no charging points. Andy also needs a device that can be mounted to quarry equipment for hands-free access.

- What combination of user types exist within your company?
- And have they been matched with the correct type of mobile devices?

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2.2 Case study

AmWorld is a UK specialist in Logistics and supply chain innovation. The company sought help when they found that the devices they were using for inventory management were inefficient and frequently broke. The consumer devices that AMWorld's mobile employees were using on the road, to move goods in and out of warehouse settings just weren't fit for business use.

Conker recommended a five-inch rugged tablet with barcode scanning (AMWorld's previous solution included a consumer device and a separate bluetooth scanner). Our solution reduced downtime and cost inefficiency and cut repair and replacement costs.

AmWorld's previous solution - a consumer device - assumed that its mobile workforce were what we term Flexible user types and only required limited protection such as a rugged case. But, as this study demonstrates, AMWorld required a fleet of devices that were fit for On their feet or Mobile Office user types.

> We have been using Tablet Technologies (Conker) for over two years, for the supply and service of our field devices. We have found them to be very responsive, both for supply and repair. I would have no hesitation in recommending them to any firm wishing a partner firm for their communication needs.
>
> Dave Rustom, CEO AmWorld

Make sure to evaluate your set of user types extensively before moving on to device specification.

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3. Defining your budget, ensuring the best return on investment (ROI) and considering ways to purchase efficiently

Remember that purpose-built devices last longer. The typical lifespan for purpose-built mobile devices used by businesses can exceed three years. On the other hand, the average consumer device lasts about 12 months before needing repair or replacement. In anything other than an office-based environment, understanding the users' needs and applications are critical to reducing the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO). Our TCO Model can help with this thinking and create useful inputs into setting your budget and ensuring the best ROI.

It is also worth considering different ways to purchase your devices in the most efficient manner to enable cash flow.

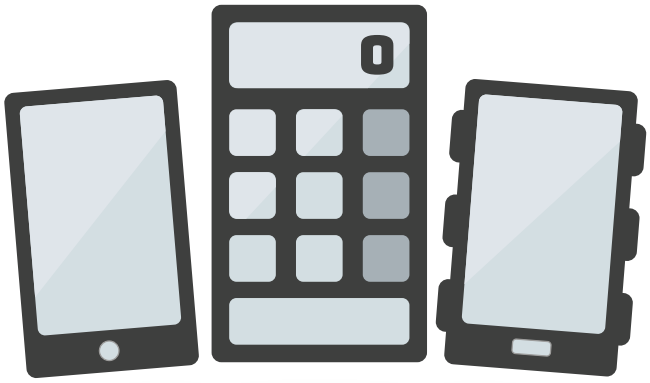
3.1 TCO Calculator

Have you considered the Total Cost of Ownership of your fleet of mobile devices?

There are a multitude of costs to factor in when procuring mobile devices. Most of these are hidden and can differ quite substantially depending on the type of device you deploy to your team.

Other than the purchase price of a mobile device, you should consider other cost implications:

- Initial capital outlay,
- Repair costs,
- Need for repairs,
- Downtime due to repairs,
- Replacement device cover, and
- Speed of service and failure rates for rugged and non-rugged devices over a three-year life expectancy.



Our ***Total Cost of Ownership Calculator*** highlights these hidden costs and considerations, revealing the true cost of owning a mobile device.

Calculate Your True Cost of Ownership

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3.2 Mobility Budget Planner

Having a comprehensive understanding of your Total Cost of Ownership helps you prepare for any 'unforeseen circumstances'. Now that all associated costs are visible, they can be reflected in your budget, for instance your device downtime strategy.

Download our Mobility Budget Planner to help efficiently plan for your business activities including the deployment of mobile devices.

Download Mobility Budget Planner Template

3.3 Subscription

When it comes to financial planning, every company is different. Purchasing mobile devices 'outright' may not suit every budget. For some businesses, choosing a non-traditional payment method such as subscription can prove particularly cost-effective. Rather than purchasing in one lump sum, a subscription allows you to pay for your mobile devices in subsidised quarterly payments over a three-year period.

A subscription plan can offer greater control and efficiency over budget, and, depending on the supplier you choose, your mobile workforce may also benefit from protection against obsolescence, data security and data compliance.

Do your research. Firstly, find out if a mobile device supplier offers subscription and how the payments are organised. Are they subsidised? Then find out the length of the agreement. Once it expires, will you be offered the latest in technology to avoid device obsolescence? Find out what the data security procedure is. Are end-of-cycle devices passed through accredited data-cleaning to ensure GDPR compliance and security? Does the supplier provide proof of secure data purge following the disposal of any retired device?

Some suppliers prioritise environmental responsibility as part of their ***subscription model***, Used devices can be repurposed into the education sector, where they will benefit nurseries and Early Years Foundation Stage establishments in the UK. Devices can have useful and valuable second lives and don't have to end up on landfills.

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3.4 Maintenance

Because users rely heavily on their mobile devices, it's important to select the right device supplier for your business. All too often, suppliers seem happy to help in the beginning, but fail to provide the same standard of service and support post-sale. This is not only disappointing but can be detrimental to your budget, productivity and staff morale.

It's tempting to choose a supplier based on brand name or price. But it's vital to understand the level of support you require before committing - and to ensure that a prospective supplier can deliver it. Find out their repair, replacement and servicing procedures. Ensure you have a dedicated account manager. All too often, IT teams find it increasingly difficult to simply speak to a human about their device provisioning. In short, make sure your supplier is easy to work with. It will make all the difference for those unexpected circumstances.

Of course, nothing lasts forever and all mobile devices break eventually. Even the military-grade devices have accidents or fail.

When this occurs, employees who are left device-less cannot fulfil their jobs properly, impacting productivity and morale.

- Do you have a device downtime strategy in place?
- Has it been tried and tested?
- Have you ensured that your IT team and device suppliers are informed and involved?

Find out what ***warranty package*** you have with your supplier:

- To what extent are you covered?
- What is the repair procedure?
- What is the agreed turnaround time?
- Find out where your supplier's service hub is situated – do they stock spare parts?
- Will your supplier collect and return your device?

If you can answer these questions and work closely with your suppliers, you have the foundations of a solid downtime strategy.

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4. Choosing your Operating System and software

The operating system (OS) that you choose for your fleet of mobile devices is going to be pre-determined by your existing application and software stack.

Your mobile team require a set of apps and software that they rely on to fulfil everyday tasks. This might include time management or job sheets applications, Building Information Modelling (BIM) software or inventory management software.

Interview your end users, familiarise yourself with their roles and find out what your current mobile software stack is. If you are undergoing digital transformation and implementing mobile devices for the first time, understand what your prospective software stack is. This will give you an idea of which OS can support your software.

You will find that 'out of the box' apps like Dropbox or Skype are supported by most OS, but for specialised or customised software, we find Windows and Android to be the most recognised in the enterprise mobility world.

4.1 Comparison table for operating systems

Below we compare the two most recognised Windows OS in mobility: Window Enterprise LTSB and Windows Pro.

Feature	Enterprise LTSB	Pro
Domain join	✓	✓
Windows Store	✗	✓
Edge Browser	✗	✓
Pre-installed Windows Universal Apps (Mail & Calendar, OneNote, Weather, News, Sports, Money, Photos, Camera, Groove Music, Xbox Games, Sway, Films & TV, 3D Builder, etc.)	✗	✓
Automatic OS feature updates	✗	✓
Remote Desktop	Client and host	Client and host
Direct Access	✓	✗
Mobile device management	✓	✓
Windows Update	✓	✓
License limitation	Any user including general public	As a personal computer (license holder only)

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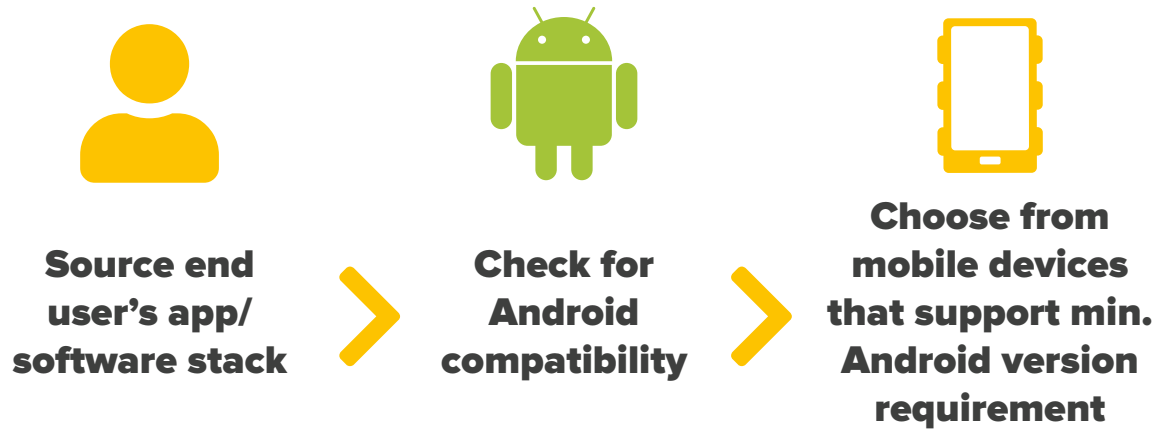
It is important to note that whilst Window Enterprise LTSB has substantially lower license fees, it does not include access to the Windows store or pre-installed apps including the camera app, which might be crucial for your mobile workforce.

In comparison to ***Windows***, there are far more versions of Android OS available due to the frequency at which they receive updates. The differences between Android OS versions are therefore more subtle when compared to Windows.

In order to select your Android OS, we recommend checking the applications and software that your mobile workers use for Android compatibility first. It could save you unnecessary spend and provide you with ***a greater choice of mobile devices***. For instance, some businesses will opt for the latest version of Android OS without researching their app and software compatibility. It then transpires that their stack only requires Android 5.1 or above, and so their decision leaves them with not only little choice in supporting mobile devices, but those that are left are generally higher in price.



4.2 Security

Whether you choose Windows or Android operating systems, the requirement for security and control over your fleet of mobile devices remain vital.

The nature of mobile working means that any number of mobile devices can be at different locations at any time. This increases the risk of stolen or lost devices - which subsequently increases the requirement for data security.

To combat this, a popular choice amongst IT professionals is Mobile Device Management software (MDM) or Endpoint Management software (UEM). Both allow for remote control of mobile devices including customised access to applications based on job role and type and the lockdown of certain areas, such as the application to complete transactions, access to company-wide personal data or even sensitive data including patents.

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5. How to assess which device is right for your company

When it comes to selecting your fleet of mobile devices, it's important to choose what is right for both your end-user and your company. But with today's myriad of options and specifications surrounding technology, this can prove daunting.

Understanding your ***user needs*** and ***budget*** is of course a vital aspect of the mobile device selection process, but in this section we focus on the device specifics, highlighting key areas of consideration for IT departments who are seeking to procure fit-for-purpose devices.

5.1 Size

Mobile device sizes will differ from business to business but should be based on two things: function and user.

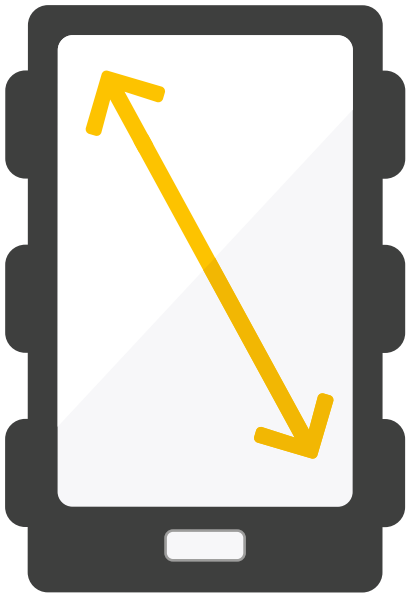
Consider the function of the mobile devices. Are you acquiring a fleet of devices whose sole function will be to help workers communicate across sites? Will they also work as smartphones? You wouldn't deploy anything larger than five to six inches if this were the case.

Think about warehouse operatives, those who need constant access to their devices and use them for scanning goods in and out. It would be impractical to provide them with anything that was not handheld.

Conversely, if you are deploying devices to forklift or other vehicle drivers, larger devices (eight to ten inches) would be most suitable. This is because the mobile device is generally mounted to the vehicle or dashboard and so requires a larger screen for better visibility.

For mobile devices that are rarely handled, such as those fixed to workstations, up to 12 inches is recommended. This allows for greater visibility of data and more comprehensive software and application views.

It is also critical to consider that the greater the size of the mobile device, (generally) the greater its weight. Ensure that employee welfare takes priority here and choose the appropriate mobile device for the role. For example, jobs that entail repetitive tasks such as pick packing require a small, light, ergonomic device to prevent injury.



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5.2 IP Testing

Whatever the combination of user types your company consists of (with the exception of your entire workforce being fixed), it is highly recommended that the devices you deploy have ingress protection.

Ingress Protection, 'IP' or 'IP rated' involves technology purpose-built to prevent the ingress of foreign matter including certain levels of dust and water:

First Number Protection against solid objects	Definition	Second Number Protection against liquids	Definition
0 	No protection	0 	No protection
1 	Protection against solid objects over 50 mm (e.g. accidental touch by hands)	1 	Protection against vertically falling drops of water
2 	Protection against solid objects over 12mm (e.g. fingers)	2 	Protection against direct sprays up to 15 degree from the vertical
3 	Protection against solid objects over 2.5mm (e.g. tools and wires)	3 	Protection against direct sprays up to 60 degree from the vertical
4 	Protection against solid objects over 1mm (e.g. tools, wires and small wires)	4 	Protection against direct sprays from all directions, limited ingress permitted
5 	Protection against dust, limited ingress (no harmful deposits)	5 	Protection against low pressure jets of water from all directions, limited ingress permitted
6 	Total protection against dust	6 	Protection against strong jets of water (e.g. for use on ship decks - limited ingress permitted
		7 	Protection against the effects of temporary immersion between 15cm and 1m. Duration of the test 30 minutes
		8 	Protection against long periods of immersion under pressure

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You might be familiar with such IP ratings as IP65, IP67 or IP68.

It's a common misconception that IP rating is a direct reflection of how rugged a device is, but this is not the case. IP only refers to a device's ability to keep foreign matter out of the devices, such as water or dust.

If you know your fleet of mobile devices is likely to be dropped, take a knock or be exposed to extreme temperatures - in addition to weather and dust, you might consider a ***'rugged mobile device'***. Those that are IP-rated are purpose-built using watertight seals, super-strong glass and shock-mounted components to protect against the rigours of the working environment.

Another misconception is that if it is any rating lower than IP68 it is inadequate. It's a mistake to assume that a higher rating implies a better standard of construction.

To put this into context, a rugged device would only require an IP68 rating if it were going to be fully submerged in water for extended periods of time, or if there were a risk of this happening. For example, marine conservationists might use a device whilst in the water. There is also a risk that if it were dropped, it couldn't be retrieved straight away. In those cases, IP68 would be suitable.

However, most businesses don't require such a device. Even if you know your users work outside in all weathers including rainfall, a lower IP-rated device such as IP65 or IP67 would be sufficient. If a worker accidentally dropped an IP67 device in a puddle it would still be protected.

While it might be tempting to go with the highest IP rating, it's unnecessary, more expensive and limits your choice of mobile devices.

So whilst it might be tempting to go with the highest IP rating, it is just not necessary, means higher costs and leaves you with less choice in mobile devices.

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5.3 Battery

When considering battery for your fleet of mobile devices, there is greater value in knowing the right questions to ask about device usage, rather than knowing the battery size or mAh (milliamp hours) rating.

Much to people's disbelief, battery mAh does not directly affect battery life. mAh refers to the storage capacity of a battery, and whilst this figure will affect the possible running time for a device - it can not be used as an exact measure for battery life.

Battery life will be determined by a multitude of factors from the application of the device to how much power the various components within the device consume. We recommend finding out exactly how your mobile team use their devices, or plan to use their devices, on a day-to-day basis. Then consider the following:

- Are the mobile devices in use for the full working day or for just a few hours a day? Does your team put them to sleep when they are not in use?
- Is full brightness necessary for the environment in which the devices are used? Could half-brightness suffice?
- Do the mobile devices rely on constant mobile data, wifi hotspot or video playback? All of which consume battery running time.
- Do your users connect to wifi to complete tasks and partially work offline when available?
- Do users work totally remotely without power sources? Or do they have some access to power during their working day?

The answers to these questions will dictate your preference in battery. Ask your supplier if you are unsure on the battery your company devices require - they should be able to tell you the average running time per device.

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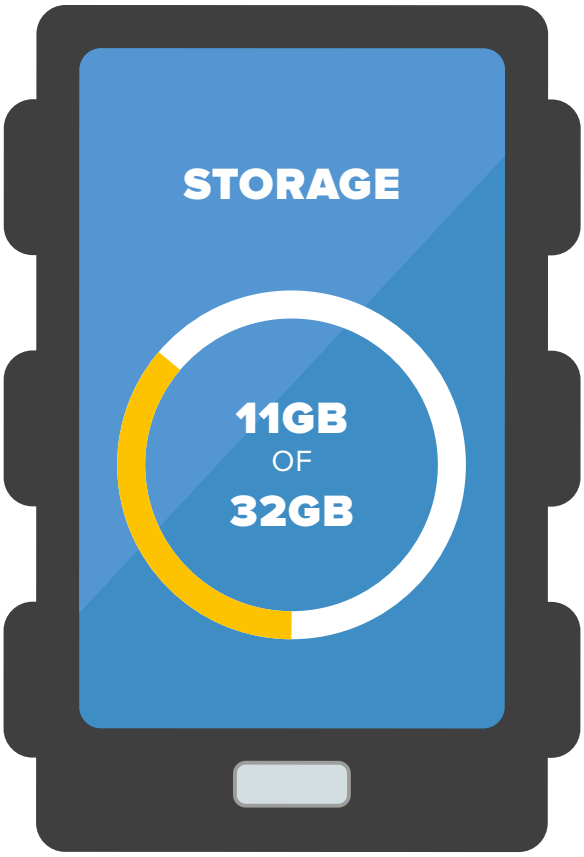
5.4 Memory / Storage

Your fleet of mobile devices will not require anywhere near as much memory and storage as consumer devices do. Your users won't have five years' worth of photo and video archives on their business device, nor will they require Candy Crush, Spotify or Whatsapp.

With this in mind, we advise finding out how much RAM (memory) your current software and applications require, and how much storage your users will need for files such as images and videos.

In short, the determining factors for choosing device RAM/storage will be how many programmes you wish to run, and their size. For instance, if your team uses cloud-based software such as Google Suite or Dropbox, less RAM is required, therefore 3GB RAM/ 32GB storage would suffice. In contrast to this, if your team primarily works offline and does not have access to cloud-based applications, then a 4GB RAM/ 64GB storage would be more suitable.



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5.5 Screen Selection

When selecting a screen for your fleet of smartphones, tablets or laptops, there are three areas for consideration:

- Durability,
- Resolution, and
- Touch

Whether your workforce is composed of some flexible users and some mobile office users, or an assortment of rugged professionals, fixed and on their feet, it is advisable to select a device that has a toughened glass screen. The only instance where this might not be necessary is if your entire workforce is fixed. Toughened glass is thermally or chemically treated to increase strength compared with normal glass and can help protect your devices against knocks and drops.

Screen resolution does not affect every user or buying decision, but it is important to know that it could be a determining factor for you. Check your software and application stack for any resolution requirements: this can be common for BIM or augmented reality-based software. In such cases, higher resolution is required to load the high-definition visuals that users rely on to complete projects.

There are many different touchscreen technologies, but the majority of mobile devices today use capacitive touchscreen technology. Capacitive touchscreens use an insulating outer layer coated with a conductive metal compound. The technology works by detecting any electrical conductivity across the layer - including the human touch. Capacitive touchscreen is lower in cost than other touchscreen technologies, long-lasting and is favoured by most users.

There are occasional cases where other touchscreen technologies such as resistive, are preferred. Resistive touchscreen consists of electrically conductive layers. When touched, the layers come into contact at that point. This point can be accurately detected and sent to the controller for processing. In instances where a device is constantly exposed to water (such as devices that are fixed to ships - not those exposed to the occasional shower), resistive is favoured. This is because capacitive can mistake on-screen water for touch.

To optimise usability, we recommend choosing mobile devices that are HD ready.

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5.6 Case study

CYBERHAWK

Cyberhawk, drone inspection, survey and visual asset management specialist, choose a rugged Conker device that is IP67-rated.

Ingress protection is essential for Cyberhawk. Maintaining the safety of infrastructures worldwide, often in potentially dangerous environments, requires protection against drops, exposure to dust, rainfall and extreme temperatures.

Reliable battery and memory/storage are also vital specifications for Cyberhawk's users. They work remotely with limited access to power sources, relying on their iHawk software to run smoothly with the ability to store large images and videos.

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6. Enhancing your mobile devices - other tools to make your staff more productive

Having assessed the standard specifications and features that most mobile devices offer, it's useful to refer back to your user types once again to consider their daily roles, tasks and requirements. Certain jobs carried out by your users may require device enhancements or additions, such as data capture hardware or further custom alterations.

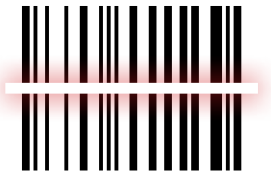
By defining and understanding these specific user roles and functions, IT departments can deploy the very best, fit-for-purpose devices to their users. The result of which is reflected through the quality of work and can improve productivity.

6.1 Data Capture Hardware

The most common device enhancement in enterprise mobility is data capture hardware. This includes additional barcode scanning capabilities and radio frequency identification (RFID).

- Are such enhancements necessary for your users?
- And if so, which data capture method should you select?

Barcode scanners that are integrated into your mobile devices are capable of identifying and reading the data that is stored in a barcode. This can then be saved or shared in the appropriate way. Choosing an integrated barcode scanner rather than a Bluetooth scanner connected to a mobile device can improve user experience and efficiency for those working in inventory control, goods in/out or pick packing. Selecting a device that has 2D barcode scanning is advised due to its capability to read 1D, 2D and QR codes.



RFID is another common data capture hardware method. Unlike barcode scanning, it doesn't need to be in line of sight to collect data, but simply in range. It is available in a number of frequencies: Low frequency, High frequency, otherwise known as NFC and Ultra high frequency. RFID can be used in a variety of ways, from scanning hard to reach pallet tags in warehouses, to acting as contactless smartcard readers for loyalty card check-ins or queue busting.

Having built cases around your user roles and requirements, you can now select mobile devices that have the correct data capture method integrated.

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6.2 Projects

If there are additional device features or further alterations that your users require to fulfill jobs, it is always worth asking if your supplier offers *bespoke projects*.

This allows you to work closely with an experienced company with a shared goal in mind - producing the best mobile device for your user and your company.

An interesting example of a custom project is Conker's rugged tablet with MRZ passport OCR reader.

A company required eight to ten-inch, IP65-rated Windows tablets with a docking solution - a mobile device that is generally straightforward to source. However, these tablets needed to be capable of reading the Machine Readable Zone, or MRZ (the lines of text found at the bottom of a passport) using optical character recognition technology, plus fingerprint reading - a more niche requirement.

Whilst this is not a standard device for most suppliers, the problem was not insoluble. Conker was able to offer variations including Windows tablet with MRZ + 2D barcode + RFID/NFC reader, Windows tablet with MRZ + 2D barcode + fingerprint reader and Android tablet with MRZ + fingerprint reader.

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7. Next Steps

This guide aims to help you systematically identify the right needs for your organisation and make the most cost-effective and efficient choices to enable your team to be productive in any circumstances.

The following checklist will help you build an effective and sustainable plan and identify suppliers that will help throughout the selection process, understanding your needs rather than just selling you some tech.

7.1 Checklist

- [ ] Identify the different user types within your organisation
- [ ] Utilise Section 4 to ensure devices fit business needs, consider:
  - [ ] Operating system to integrate with your IT infrastructure
  - [ ] Security Requirements
- [ ] Utilise Section 5 to identify the right types of device requirements for different user types, consider:
  - [ ] Screen
  - [ ] Battery
  - [ ] Memory
  - [ ] Size
  - [ ] Durability
- [ ] Build a budget to suit your business and user needs, consider
  - [ ] Total cost of ownership
  - [ ] Methods of payments
  - [ ] Maintenance
- [ ] Look at the enhancements available to improve productivity
  - [ ] Data capture hardware
  - [ ] Bespoke requirements
- [ ] Identify a supplier that can truly help make the right decisions

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7.2 Key questions to ask your supplier

- Do you provide alternative payment methods such as subscription plans?
  - What is the agreement period?
  - How often will I make a payment?
  - Is there interest involved?
  - What happens once the agreement period is up?
  - Do you destroy end-of-cycle devices - or are they repurposed?
  - What happens to our data once the device is returned? Is there GDPR compliance involved?

- What level of support is offered?
  - How accessible is your technical support team?
  - What hours can you offer support? Will I be put through to a human?
  - Will I have a dedicated account manager?
  - Will you take our downtime strategy and device forecasting into consideration?
  - What are your lead times?

- Do you provide warranty packages?
  - What is included in each warranty option?
  - Is accidental cover available?
  - What is your repair procedure?
  - What are your repair turnaround times?
  - Where is your service hub situated?
  - Do you stock spare parts?
  - Will you collect and return any devices that require repairs?

- How rugged do I need to go?
  - For my user types, what IP rating do I really need?
  - Is IP67 necessary for the risk of light rain or spillages? Or will a lower rating suffice?

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Talk to us if you'd like to explore any of the ideas here or need any more information.

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