

# CONSUMERISATION OF I.T. - ORGANISATIONS CANNOT IGNORE IT

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MANY KEY INDUSTRY ANALYSTS, INCLUDING GARTNER AND FORRESTER, HAVE IDENTIFIED CONSUMERISATION OF I.T. AS POTENTIALLY THE DECADE'S MOST DISRUPTIVE I.T. TREND. HOW WILL THIS IMPACT CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS ENVIRONMENTS AND WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS?

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## 1. WHAT IS CONSUMERISATION OF IT?

Consumerisation of IT is a term used to describe a growing trend in which organisations are increasingly allowing their staff to select, procure and use their own devices at work. Those in favour see it as a way of liberating their employees, increasing creativity, and as a tactic for restoring work/life balance and enabling the recruitment of the brightest new talent. Opponents, however, believe it leads to inconsistency, manageability issues and information security risks. The truth is somewhere in the middle: many employees at all levels enjoy being able to use state-of-the-art consumer devices, predominantly tablets and smartphones rather than traditional business supplied devices, and they deliver clear opportunities for improving collaboration. But strong governance and recognition of the potential impact are needed to ensure that benefits are not lost in a chaotic environment where IT leaders lose control. The challenge for IT is to be able to embrace consumerisation where it is appropriate while at the same time minimising business risk.

## 2. THE BENEFITS

It changes the way employees communicate with customers and partners to improve reach, engagement and intimacy. Customisation of IT is also changing how employees work and collaborate internally through new consumer applications.

It provides for and supports a more technology-savvy workforce. The level of expectation for cutting edge technology is high among employees and today, the newest technologies, devices, and applications offer true competitive advantage.

Training your employees is easier. Critical to a successful technology implementation is the education and training on how to fully exploit the new technology to produce business results. The savvy

workforce, being familiar with consumer technology, is often more productive leveraging their own devices and technology when integrated in the corporate environment. And for those instances when new corporate applications and technologies are deployed, the employee learning curve is shortened.

Enterprises are more agile. It's nearly impossible to keep up with all technology advances and predict which will best serve the corporate environment. Yet by keeping a pulse on the consumer market, IT leaders can ready themselves and be prepared for the next great thing that comes along and adapt quicker.

## 3. THE RISKS

Security remains one of the most important considerations for the use of mobile devices in enterprises. Regulated industries and public sector enterprises can't risk deploying services that could compromise data, customer information or prevent compliance. If personally owned mobile devices are incorporated into an organisation, in order to satisfy data security requirements, the company may require employees to hand over control of sections of their devices to enable remote management, a remote wipe facility and segmentation of work and personal information.

Employees will expect some form of IT support for personal devices requiring IT helpdesks to have an appropriate level of understanding and knowledge of the most used applications and devices.

Usage of personal devices to access work email and data is increasing and is almost impossible to stop. The continuing increase in company usage of tablets, and personal ownership of these devices, will only make this issue more acute as tablets are increasingly able to perform a wider range of PC-like functions, thus extending this issue beyond just emails and attachments.

## CONCLUSION

Consumerisation remains a hot topic across IT departments and there are many questions that need to be addressed by organisations before attempting to embrace this. Organisations should develop a clear strategic approach covering security risk management, device and data management, organisational policies, implementation planning and the expected business benefits of consumerisation.

## ABOUT US

Wavestone is an international consultancy that provides connected thinking, insight and capability to industry leading organisations. We work collaboratively with our clients to plan strategic business transformation and seamlessly turn strategy into action.

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