



Bring Your Own Mobile Initiative Shares Responsibility, Drives Cost Savings

Business Transformation through IT Transformation

Summary

Throughout the industry, a trend toward shared responsibility for cost centers has driven employee engagement in corporate expenses. The result is financial citizenship, increased dialog between management and line of business workers, better awareness of expenses and, of course, cost savings.

VMware had been supporting most employees on mobile devices owned by the company. The costs were considerable. In 2011, VMware saw the cost of provisioning and servicing mobile devices to its growing enterprise surge 25 percent year-over-year. The company had approximately 4,000 mobile devices in the U.S. alone.

The Journey

Like many organizations, VMware had scaled with the times when use of cell phones and other mobile devices was soaring, adapting to the industry norm that a global business that never stops should empower its employees with 24/7 access to business conversations from anywhere.

But that norm had shifted. As the industry emerged from the downturn, VMware saw a trend away from companies providing employees with mobile devices and paying almost unconditionally for all plans. The company adopted a “Bring Your Own Mobile” (BYOM) initiative for all U.S. employees in late 2011 and successfully shifted the ownership of devices and call plans to employees. It has set narrower guidelines for which employees are eligible for reimbursement for wireless/cell phone expenses. The BYOM is planned to subsequently roll out in Canada, Europe and Asia.

“Our new U.S. employee mobile device policy moves us toward a model of ‘shared responsibility’ where employees have complete freedom to select the device and service plan that best meets their business and personal needs, with VMware sharing some of the expense,” said Mark Egan, CIO, in a memo issued to all U.S. employees November 8, 2011.

One driver for the initiative was growing user dissatisfaction with the type of device the company would purchase for them. Many wanted an iPhone or whatever was the latest trend. Management and IT were spending considerable time communicating why and how other devices were sometimes a more cost-effective choice for the company. In addition, users needed a calling plan that would support their business and personal needs — sometimes including family plan requirements. Users were confined to only carriers with whom they’d negotiated plans that served the company.

“Getting IT out of provisioning cell phones means faster cycles and more choice for employees,” said Job Simon, Vice President, IT Strategy and Architecture. “While any change requires adjustment, the fiscal accountability employees now have for their mobile devices drives the kind of engagement that can only come from ownership. It’s their plan, their device, their option to make plan changes to suit themselves with clear knowledge of what VMware can support.”

VMware has plan options with Verizon, AT&T, Sprint and T Mobile; employees may create their own relationship with these providers while still benefitting from the reduced rate the company has negotiated.

Now, users can pick any phone or device and a plan of their choosing. With clear guidelines on what the company can cover, they are free to let personal preferences drive their choices, knowing that the company will reimburse them according to where they fit in the matrix of corporate coverage.

VMware recently implemented Socialcast, an online community that has driven employee engagement with company issues and increased dialog between management, C-level and line of business workers. It's been an effective tool in discussing the Bring Your Own Mobile initiative; VMware was able to hold a "Town Hall" meeting where executives explained the rationale for BYOM and took questions and comments from users.. Having Socialcast as a tool for conversations on BYOM helped build a knowledge base for management and allowed the user community to share experiences and learn from each other, and this access to the C-level also seemed to make employees feel more comfortable with the change

The End Result

Bring Your Own Mobile is the first step in transitioning employees on a corporate mobile plan to one of personal liability. In parallel, VMware is also conducting various pilot programs to implement Horizon Mobile Manager as well as comprehensive and secure mobile device management and mobile applications management. The company is also developing mobile applications to be provisioned to employees. The goal is to provide employees with a seamless mobile experience on their own devices while securing the company's intellectual property.