

# Developing a Mobile Strategy

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## Today's foresight leads to tomorrow's success

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### Today's Environment

You only need to look around you—or pick up your own smartphone or tablet—to understand the huge and growing demand for well-designed mobile solutions. A recent Nilson Report indicates that the total number of mobile phones in the world is equal to the total number of credit cards, internet users, and cars and trucks in circulation combined. Already, over 1 billion of these mobile phones are connected smartphones, and that number is growing every day.

No other communication medium in history has been embraced as rapidly by so many, and none is more personal and ubiquitous in daily life. To address the demands and realize the opportunities of this connected, always-on mobile audience, companies need to develop a long-term strategy that is specific to mobile and aligned to their corporate goals.

A mobile strategy should drive intuitive, easy-to-use solutions that meet customer needs and can be delivered and supported by the company. Instead, many organizations have taken the mobile leap without a deliberate mobile strategy. They approach mobile in a generic way with mediocre results. The detrimental effects of this short-sighted approach may even spill over to erode a company's overall brand reputation.

### Our Perspective

Point B has helped leading companies in the airline, global retail, and financial services industries optimize their mobile presence through the execution of mobile strategies that connect with their customers, reinforce their brand, and give them a competitive edge. It's our experience that successful mobile strategies are built on a number of considerations and commitments particular to your organization and, most importantly, to your customer.

In many cases, companies have moved forward in their haste to "get something out there." We suggest that before diving in,

companies take a metaphorical step back. Rethinking a mobile strategy for the long-term can lead to mobile experiences that are more tailored to customers' expectations and devices. In addition, a well-thought-out strategy coupled with a solid execution plan will save development costs, reduce time to market, and simplify support.

We recently hosted a Mobile Roundtable that brought together a number of prominent clients to discuss mobile strategy. The discussion reinforced the four truths, below, that we believe are crucial to creating or revamping a mobile strategy.

**Avoid the "something is better than nothing" trap.** Mobile customers have high expectations for mobile applications. Delivering a lesser experience may not be "better than nothing" after all. Compromising performance or your users' experience can do more harm than good.

This problem is often apparent when native applications and mobile websites have virtually the same functionality as their desktop counterparts. Some companies' mobile applications offer no additional functionality over their websites. In fact, some of the applications are simply 'frames' that access the mobile site when launched. After customers have gone to the trouble of finding a company's app and installing it, they may not feel rewarded for their efforts.

The goal should be to "Earn your place on your customers' mobile devices." Take the time to think through creating a mobile application or (mobile optimized) website that provides value to consumers and is useful and efficient.

**Embrace mobile and prepare to commit, financially and strategically.** A common mistake organizations make when attempting to address the mobile space is to think in terms of how to 'adapt for mobile'. Organizations that treat mobile as an afterthought do so at the risk of their credibility. It takes

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commitment to a well-established mobile strategy to build the foundation for successful mobile offerings going forward.

We encourage clients to think of mobile today as the web was in the late-1990s: It's a revolutionary change that companies need to embrace with a long-term vision. Leading research shows that global internet users will triple over the next few years, and more than 75 percent of those users will be on mobile devices.

The bar for launching a successful mobile strategy continues to be raised with each increasingly clever and sophisticated application that hits the market. Customers expect true utility, intuitive interfaces, speed, convenience, and even novelty.

Writing great apps to meet or exceed these expectations can become an involved and expensive proposition. Spending the time and money up-front to develop a great product focused on meeting both your business objectives and customer needs can help solve the problem and makes solid business sense. For 'lighter' duty, or if a company can't fully commit resources to designing, building and maintaining apps, web apps offer a lot of utility without the same level of investment. In some cases, they make more strategic and financial sense. (See "The Future is MOW" article.)

**Be true to the device.** The most successful mobile products and features are designed specifically for the device on which they will run. They enhance a customer's mobile experience for the time, place and technology of choice.

Keep in mind that smartphones and tablets are two very different devices used in very different ways. People use smartphones for quick, convenient transactions. They're trying to 'get in and out', with the perceived notion that mobile is a time-saver. Tablet applications, on the other hand, should offer a more in-depth, leisurely and analytical experience. Saving time is not the driver here; maximizing free time is. The capabilities and features you offer should cater to those contrasting experiences.

While features and functionality should differ with each mobile device, your company's branding should be clear and consistent across all of the devices you support. Don't let mobile users lose sight of your brand. Its look, feel and personality should be a unifying presence across all mobile

(and non-mobile) devices. Link the strengths of your mobile apps to your brand—and vice versa.

**Leverage the strengths of distinct offerings.** While Mobile Optimized Websites (MOWs) are practical and growing in their appeal, native applications offer a unique user experiences that fully leverage the native capabilities of the mobile device (e.g. camera, text, email, video, chat, etc.). In addition, native apps still provide advantages of presentation over MOWs. Although the use of HTML 5 does enrich MOW capabilities, it has a way to go to compete with the presentation speeds of native applications. In addition, web-based solutions are still heavily data-reliant, which can cause latency in the user experience. Native apps are less dependent on data to render, giving them significant performance advantages. Refer to our insights on [mobile optimized websites](#) for more information.

### The Bottom Line

Creating a mobile strategy is not new. The trick is creating the right strategy for your company and dedicating the resources to plan, implement and support it. Initially, many companies rushed out and "fired into space." Now is the time to evaluate where you are, what you have, and the opportunities you might capture by adapting and evolving your strategy. If you haven't done it yet, don't feel you're too late to the game. Mobile is evolving so quickly that even the world's biggest technology brands are changing strategy and launching new applications.

The key is quality. Many of the world's most popular consumer brands have set customer expectations for a first-rate mobile experience that leverages the unique form and function of the mobile platform. No matter what industry or market you're in, you'll want your mobile presence to meet the high bar that's been set.

### For More Information

For more information about our mobile services, contact Point B at [clientinquiry@pointb.com](mailto:clientinquiry@pointb.com).