



Guidelines for Wireless Solutions

Executive Summary

Wireless software is still a “Wild West” of conflicting claims, features, and incompatible technologies. How do you sort through the confusion to acquire a simple-to-use, enterprise ready, and affordable solution for your business? This white paper provides some guidelines that help every business realize the enormous return on investment available from effective wireless solutions.

Copyright © 2004 - 2007 JumpStart Wireless Corporation. All rights reserved.

JumpStart Wireless™ BusinessSuite™ Guidelines for Wireless Solutions



What are the key features and approaches that make wireless systems easy to use by mobile field staff and office staff? What should a company look for when evaluating vendors? Why should a company or institution be looking at a wireless investment at all?

Wireless business software – wireless dispatch, work orders, time cards, location tracking, asset management, inspections – is emerging as a critical productivity technology. Many companies are considering how to best leverage this technology to improve their operations. We regularly hear about one critical concern: “I don’t know if my staff can effectively use this technology,” “we’re not really computer types” and or the more blunt “I just don’t think my guys are smart enough for that stuff”.

We work with many different industries every day and can point to many successes. The key success factor for wireless data to your field staff is making it easy for them to use. This article discusses how companies can make wireless technology easy to use and, just as important, easy to produce a rapid return on investment.

Here are 10 rules for “making wireless easy”:

1. Work with someone who has put the pieces together for you

Wireless software is still the wild west: there are different devices, wireless carriers, and software technologies, each with their own technical peculiarities, that need to be assembled into a complete solution. There are plenty of companies willing to put all these pieces together for you – you are not required to figure out the complexities on your own. Beware of vendors looking to sell you just a device, or just the software, or just the monthly data plan. Look for a vendor that will sell you a complete solution, ready to roll out to your staff immediately.

2. Leverage your existing software

Simple wireless approaches will work with your existing software. There is no reason to consider a wireless solution that requires you to change the software programs you are already using for work orders, project tracking, and other key corporate systems.

3. Leverage your existing paper forms and process

You have already done extensive work building existing processes and systems to best manage your business. Those processes are built into the paper forms your field and office staff already use. Work with vendors that begin with *your* forms. Why should you have to adopt your company to someone else's approach?

4. Browsing and Email are not sufficient. "Business forms" – like work orders, inspection reports, payroll timesheets, delivery orders, etc. -- are the best metaphor to visualize and implement wireless applications.

Mobile field work is task focused and step-by-step oriented, like a form. Wireless work for mobile employees is poorly represented in a browser or by non-linear, random browsing. Email doesn't get the job done either because email cannot capture or manage the detailed data fields necessary for business transactions and corporate databases. Look for wireless solutions that allow you to present forms-based processes which optimize the field workers' time and effectiveness. Besides everything else, wireless business forms give much better return on investment. Unlike wireless email, wireless forms make it is very easy to quantify exactly where paperwork and extra office activities can be eliminated.

5. Wireless applications should work with any device and with any wireless carrier.

The world of wireless devices and applications is under intense development. Today's cutting edge, breakthrough products are obsolete in 6 to 9 months and no longer available for sale. Business applications cannot afford to be dependent on such rapidly changing technology. Screen sizes, keyboards, printers, and cameras undergo order of magnitude improvements with each new release. Along with the rapid innovation in devices, carriers announce ever faster and cheaper wireless data services. While exciting, this world demands that wireless applications work through generations of devices and networks without reprogramming. Discuss with your vendors how your investments in wireless software design, training, and deployment will last 3-5 years. Applications should "just work" on improved devices and networks.

6. Wireless applications no longer require expensive custom programming and time-consuming systems integration.

Just as companies no longer consider custom programming their own accounting systems, it makes no sense to custom program wireless software. Look for wireless software vendors where you can buy a solution, tailored to your operations, and ready to rollout with minimal effort.

7. Leverage familiar, cost effective, and mass-market devices

You can buy \$1500 specialized personal digital assistants, ruggedized and designed for people like construction workers. You can also use a \$100 programmable cell phone. The \$100 phone is familiar, easy to use, and is easily replaced should it be damaged. As long as your wireless

software gets your data to a safe place as quickly as possible, there is far more value and ease-of-use in the \$100 phone.

8. Practical wireless software must continue to operate, even when the device is disconnected from the network.

Wireless devices are commonly out of coverage as field workers go in and out of building cores, in and out of remote parts of town, and in and out of coverage shadows. Practical business applications demand that wireless solutions operate “non-stop”: a user must still be able to work, even if they have lost connection to a wireless network. When back in coverage, all data should be transparently and reliably synchronized with the server.

9. Start with the tasks where you know your processes are inefficient

Don't try and solve every problem that might be solved by wireless. Get started with something that has an obvious, immediate payoff. Start with a simple business task where it is obvious that you deliver significant immediate business value. Save the complexities and special cases for Phase 2.

10. Get started now

You will learn more about wireless with your first project than you will learn from a year of careful study. Pick a wireless software vendor that follows these guidelines, and get started now. There is no reason to wait. The payoff from wireless software can run as high as \$500-\$800 per field worker per month. Most organizations have dozens of ways to begin automating their field staff and realizing those benefits – the key is to get started now.

At JumpStart Wireless™ we are experts in providing affordable, complete, easy-to-use wireless solutions tailored to your needs. Please contact us to find out more about our application: 561-243-4700 ext 200 or solutions@jumpstartwireless.com

Copyright © 2004 - 2007 JumpStart Wireless Corporation, All Rights Reserved.

