

Other aspects of the Windows Mobile and Mobile Device Manager platform also enhance productivity. Mobile VPN provides seamless and persistent connectivity even across networks, in addition to fast reconnect functionality, helping users connect when they need to and reducing another common source of help desk calls. The multiple device form factors supported by Windows Mobile enable companies to standardise on a small number of devices while still giving employees the ability to choose devices that meet their needs. Device diversity also allows for productivity-enhancing mLOB scenarios like bar code-based inventory management or routing with GPS-enabled devices.

Development and distribution

The attributes that define LOB applications – data richness, power and specialised functionality – tend to work best on a mobile platform that is designed for application-based productivity. Windows Mobile provides a desktop-like experience for mobile workers, making it easier to develop, distribute and manage mLOB applications.

To begin with, Windows Mobile supports a version of .NET called the .NET Compact Framework. Since the .NET Framework is a programming toolset used by millions of developers worldwide, many IT operations already have the development skills in-house to customise and create mLOB applications for Windows Mobile. If they don't, those skills are readily available in the marketplace.

Windows Mobile also supports a large number of commercially available mLOB applications. Microsoft offers mLOB solutions as part of its Microsoft Dynamics product family, including Microsoft Dynamics CRM Mobile and Microsoft Dynamics AX Mobile Sales. Also, Microsoft Dynamics Mobile Development Tools provide developers with technologies for extending the software to the mobile environment.

Microsoft has made a commitment to take other Microsoft Dynamics solutions mobile, with Microsoft Dynamics NAV support coming soon. And most major LOB solutions, such as SAP, Siebel, PeopleSoft and Salesforce.com, provide Windows Mobile-compatible versions of their application suites. Once they have been purchased or

Additional Resources

- **Microsoft System Center Mobile Device Manager 2008**
www.microsoft.com/uk/mobiledevicemanager
- **Introducing Microsoft System Center Mobile Device Manager 2008**
www.microsoft.com/systemcenter/mobile
- **Microsoft System Center Mobile Device Manager 2008: A Technical White Paper**
www.microsoft.com/uk/systemcenterMDM
- **Microsoft System Center Mobile Device Manager 2008: An Introduction for Business Audiences**
www.microsoft.com/uk/windowsmobilebusiness
- **Windows Mobile Line of Business Solution Accelerator 2008**
www.microsoft.com/uk/windowsmobilesolutionaccelerator

developed, mLOB applications can be deployed and managed over the air using Mobile Device Manager and Windows Server Update Services 3.0. Group Policy can be used to set which devices receive the application and what functions they can access. Note that application updates can be performed in the same easy manner.

The bottom line

A growing number of companies are providing mLOB applications to employees and executives, adding new considerations for those tasked with deploying and maintaining IT systems. Windows Mobile and Mobile Device Manager deliver on the vision of network-ready mobile devices, providing an easy-to-manage platform for mLOB development and deployment. It is a platform that maximises security and user productivity while minimising IT department headaches and infrastructure investment. And because Mobile Device Manager lets you scale mLOB deployments to a larger number of users, the cost of mLOB development and deployment per user is decreased while ROI per user is increased. Thus, the ease of managing Windows Mobile with Mobile Device Manager frees you to think creatively about how mLOB applications can be used most effectively – instead of how to get them working in the first place. ■

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