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Sep. 29, 2014



Businesses across America and the world are increasingly reliant on mobile devices, especially those in industries such as distribution, hospitality services and construction, according to the latest Sage SMB Survey on Mobile Devices. However, few of these businesses actually budget for those devices, instead purchasing mobile solutions as needs arise and relying on workers and management to provide their own.

Sage North America has announced the industry results of the Sage SMB Survey on Mobile Devices, finding that while sectors such as manufacturing and distribution,

food and beverage and construction overwhelmingly agree that mobile technology

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proving that it's worthwhile to suggest that companies plan for mobile — whether it's a specific line item expense or it's an official BYOD policy.”

Manufacturing and Distribution

The survey found that 74 percent of manufacturers and distributors are not setting a budget for mobile technology. Yet the uptick in use as well as the benefits are pervasive among business owners, with more than half (51 percent) using mobile devices and applications to access work-related material when away from the office. Of those, 76 percent have at least one employee using laptops, 74 percent have at least one employee using smartphones, and 49 percent have at least one employee using tablets. Areas where mobile technology has had a positive impact include customer service (72 percent), conducting business during inclement weather (28 percent) and bringing more work to the company (26 percent).

According to the [Institute for Supply Management](#), a trade group of purchasing managers, its manufacturing index rose to 57.1 — the highest level since April 2011 — and up from 55.3 in June (anything above 50 signals a growing sector). Further, a recent [Sage manufacturing survey](#) found that business confidence is up and that 40 percent of manufacturers are expecting to see growth in their business as a result of reshoring.

As the manufacturing sector expects to grow, mobile technology can help keep businesses competitive. When using the right application, mobile technology gives salespeople access to transaction-critical data, such as inventory and sales quote forms, which ultimately helps them close deals. Mobile business applications can also enable seamless integration between the production plant and the office, eliminating potential bottlenecks between departments.

The Sage SMB survey on mobile devices was conducted amongst an independent

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percent set any kind of budget for mobile technology and applications. Furthermore, one-fifth (20 percent) of construction companies have a single employee dedicated to maintaining IT systems on a full-time basis.

The positive effects of mobile technology have been most keenly felt in the area of customer service. Seventy-five percent of respondents stated that client support has been improved in their company since the adoption of mobile technology.

With regard to mobile applications, organizations were less concerned with customer service and more interested in connectivity. Among six different options, nearly half (44 percent) of respondents agreed that their number-one priority is for an app to integrate with their existing system. The next most popular mobile application priority was far behind, with 17 percent pronouncing monthly cost to be their primary consideration.

“The construction industry inherently requires mobility,” said Langner. “Mobile technology can enable design teams and contractors to access construction documents, enter timecards, take photos and publish reports all from the field, improving decision making and efficiency. With so many professionals in the industry spending substantial time on job sites, transporting materials and meeting with clients on the go, it’s imperative that construction businesses adopt mobile technologies to ensure they remain competitive.”

Participation in the study included accountants/bookkeepers, office managers and organizational leadership in 331 small and midsize construction companies in the United States and Canada. The error rate for this particular sector was +/- 5.2 percent with a 95 percent confidence level. Complete findings from the study are available [here](#).

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bringing in more work to the company (27 percent). Mobile devices prove to be a beneficial tool for employees who access work-related information when they are not in the office: 76 percent use smartphones, and 67 percent use laptops.

Mobile technology can help ignite growth opportunities, especially for those companies in retail food service, where mobile payments can enhance guest service, increase sales and expedite orders. Mobility has rapidly changed the way that food and beverage companies conduct business, allowing them to provide an essential offering outside of their place of business, in turn opening a greater outlet for sales.

The Sage SMB Survey on Mobile Devices included 102 food and beverage industry respondents in the U.S. and Canada and has an error rate of +/- 11 percent with a confidence level of 95 percent. Complete findings from the food and beverage study can be found [here](#).

Small Business • Technology

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