

BYoX strategy can produce a competitive edge

By [Zain Patel](#)

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It's widely accepted now that employees rather than the business dictate IT policy. Those of your people who don't like the technology on which your organisation runs simply won't use it - or won't use it to good effect. This has a direct negative impact on productivity.



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However, there's a much more profound principle at work in the relationship between employees and organisational technology landscapes. Smart technology, in particular, adds a happiness component to working that cannot be created in any other way. The typewriter couldn't deliver it. Nor could the fax machine. The PC was the beginning of a playfulness and personalisation in work that has since mushroomed through the internet and social media.

Why should happy employees be a strategic factor? Because organisations that disallow playfulness and personalisation or pro-actively try to stamp them out lose out on the innovation that follows them like day follows night. When employees feel as good at work as they do in their private lives, the organisation thrives. In today's world, that feel good factor largely depends on employees having access to the devices and connectivity they prefer. They want to be able to bring their own everything (BYoX) to work.

Bosses with vision

Obviously, workplaces where own devices and access are not allowed or cannot be supported become dull, at best, and labour camps, at worst. Employees cannot wait to get out of them at the end of a working day. A little less obviously, the fact that executives don't 'get' BYoX is subconsciously seen by employees as both reactionary and lacking in vision.

So, the question about whether or not your organisation should be enabling BYoX is not really about whether you have the technology platforms, the necessary security, and the usage policies in place. It comes down to whether or not you want your organisation to be a place where people really want to work and that they want to represent.

If you're having a BYoX debate in exco, ask this question: Just how good is our customer experience going to be if our customers are served by people who hate working for our organisation - or who think it is old-fashioned? Bring your own everything to work includes bringing your own happiness to work. Astute employers will make that possible. This doesn't necessarily mean having to invest in expensive infrastructure or onerous security systems that will protect your data and IP.

It does mean embracing the strategic fact that your company operates in the Internet of Things era and that your employees are way ahead of your IT department in terms of connecting themselves to the world of their choice via every device they have, including their TV, their watch, their lighting systems, their cars, and, soon, their clothes.

But, not all of your employees are equally connected. The place to start embracing your involvement in the Internet of Things is to do a survey of your own people. Find out what their devices of choice are. Find out how frequently they use their own devices, their own 3 or 4G to connect to customers or to your VPN (because your network is slower than the one they use privately), how often they work outside of the office (at home or at the local coffee shop), simply because they can, and how often they resort to social media (WhatsApp being a biggie) to stay in contact with your suppliers and customers.

You'll probably find that your admin staff is less focused on BYoX and that your sales and service staff are more so.

The three s's

With this knowledge you can start to make BYoX work to your organisation's advantage at a pace that doesn't put your budget or IT department under pressure. It will also be a pace that gives you time to adapt your business strategy in such a way as to make BYoX a competitive advantage for the organisation.

In doing so, there are three basics to remember: security, standardisation, and subjectivity.

The good news is that security is not going to be the nightmare you imagine. Smart devices have sophisticated processing capabilities that equal or exceed that of most corporate systems. Most likely, therefore, you will be able to extend your existing security with easily deployable and comparatively inexpensive digital solutions to ensure that your employees' BYoX does not endanger your company.

Standardisation equates to choosing to support the most popular BYoX options rather than trying to cover all possibilities. Your employee survey will tell you which are your employee's most popular BYoX options, enabling you to find a middle ground between their choices and the technologies you would prefer to support. This will keep IT costs down, reduce the work IT needs to do for BYoX, and ensure optimal employee buy-in to your approach.

Subjectivity simply means not assuming that because you enable BYoX there'll be mass employee uptake. Not yet, anyway. That said, the Dimension Data Global Contact Centre Benchmarking Report shows that, in contact centres, by 2017, voice contact will be superseded by digital contact. This is because the market is getting younger and so is the employee pool. People under the age of 35 would rather interact digitally than by voice. As this generation becomes the predominant one in the organisation, that preference will play itself out in BYoX.

So, save yourself from making BYoX mistakes by knowing your employees and rolling out BYoX in sync with their technology-driven work and play preferences. There is no turning the clock back. We can't prevent or avoid BYoX and we

can't undo it. Why not turn into an operational benefit?

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