

The Hidden Costs of Bring-Your-Own-Device

While many CIOs might boast about the cost savings associated with Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) programs, *business owners beware* – BYOD programs come with their own hidden costs.

Before implementing a BYOD program for your business, here are four hidden costs many owners are not aware of:

Hidden Cost: The Monthly Premium Hit

Although many business owners get excited about the cost savings of not having to provide employees with company hardware, they often forget about the cost of the service that goes along with these devices.

Prior to BYOD models, when a company purchased hardware in bulk they often received a volume-discount; often times, free replacements as well as further discounts when buying services in bulk from a single carrier. Under a

BYOD program, a company loses these types of benefits. Although losing a volume discount for hardware is not a big deal since employees are paying out of pocket for their hardware, the hidden costs emerge when your employee sets up service on their device. According to research by Aberdeen Group, a company seizing a volume discount rate and optimizing plans for certain employees spends an average of \$60-per-month for a smartphone's wireless voice and data services. On the other hand, the average BYOD reimbursement for a smartphone is \$70-per-month.

Hidden Cost: Expense Reports

Even though BYOD programs seem less expensive up front, most business owners forget about the costs associated with reimbursing BYOD employees.

Typically, an employee files a monthly expense report for their wireless bill. According to Aberdeen Group, a single expense report costs about \$18 to process. So when you figure this hidden cost, the \$70-per-month BYOD phone is actually looking more like \$90-per-month.

Furthermore, employees will often expense their entire wireless bill



rather than itemize it. The issue with BYOD service plans is that they do not let an employer know what was used for business and what was used for personal use, which could mean that your business is paying for more than it actually should be.

Hidden Cost: Security Management and Data Loss

By focusing on the cost savings of a BYOD program, business owners often overlook the potential of data loss and security breaches.

When a company buys hardware in bulk, they are able to set up a process to automate deployment as well as management in a scalable way. When employees are able to provide their own devices, an IT person needs to track down each device and input each individual device into a system, recording phone numbers, IMEIs (international mobile equipment identity) and employee information. Although Aberdeen Group does not provide a cost on this labour-intensive practice, it is a pretty realistic pain-point for a business that is going to be implementing a BYOD program.

Furthermore, there are security and compliance costs associated with BYOD programs. When employees are able to provide their own hardware, there is very little probability that they will all be comfortable using the same devices. This means that CIOs will have to invest in multi-platform mobile device management solutions and other software which will need to be updated if and when employees purchase new handsets that are not currently supported.

Hidden Cost: Who Helps the Help Desk?

One of the most important and overlooked hidden cost is in help desk support.

When BYOD programs are used, IT departments are caught between a rock a hard place where they do not control the actions of the carrier or the device but they are still held responsible to offer support to BYOD employees, even if they are not provided with additional resources to do so.

On the other hand, businesses could go the other direction where they unload BYOD support onto the

employees themselves. Have a problem with your iPad? Head to the nearest Apple store and get personalized assistance there. However, when this route is chosen, businesses don't really have control of the device and the data if employees are solely responsible for managing their own devices.

Bottom line: Businesses that are looking to implement a BYOD policy should either invest in help desk support or look at outsourcing the support.

Want more information about BYOD or help implementing your own program?

To learn more about Bring-Your-Own-Device programs and how they can benefit your business, please contact Intega IT at (613)260-1114 or by email at sales@intega.ca.