

The Secrets of User Segmentation for Meeting End-User Needs

Bruce Michelson from HP and Dustin Pursel from Staples explain the evolution of IT needs in the workplace, and why segmentation is so important.

Do you know your end users? “End-user experience is the most critical success factor in IT,” says Bruce Michelson, the National Lifecycle Manager for Hewlett-Packard’s Personal Systems Group. “It used to be one of several, but it’s now the primary way that IT is measured.”

The trend is often called the “consumerization of IT,” and it’s largely a byproduct of fast-moving technology.

The Alienation of IT

“Commercial tablets were created in 2010,” says Michelson. “You have college and high school students who spent four years with mobility. They are as qualified in many cases as current level-one help desk resources.”

IT’s challenge is that at the same time that workers are entering the workplace with high expectations for mobility and devices, IT budgets have been slashed.

“The Great Recession, from 2008-2010, extended the useful life of laptops and desktops in offices,” he says. “So this generation of workers coming in were comparing a shiny new consumer device to an XP-running, four-year-old desktop, and they weren’t happy about it. IT did nothing wrong, but the challenge for IT was to do more with significantly less, to hunker down and deal with it.”

Dustin Pursel, Field Sales Director — Technology Solutions for Staples — says the disconnect between IT and end users is obvious.

“What I’m seeing in the workplace is a lot of generations intermixed, wanting a lot of choices,” he says. “But IT budgets are being cut. So IT is having to offer choices with limited budget and limited time. IT is overwhelmed with requests for choice, and I think it’s alienating IT from the workforce.” That alienation is a huge security risk, says Michelson.

“When the end user’s wants can’t be accommodated, they say, ‘Well, I’m going to do what I need to do to get my job done, whatever the consequences,’” he says. “If an end user is using a device that IT isn’t ready for, it’s high risk. That’s why we have to be intimate with the end user. When we are out of sync with the end user, that’s when you have stealth IT.”



5 DOMAINS OF USER SEGMENTATION

1. Devices
2. Cost
3. Support
4. Applications
5. Security implications

The Importance of User Segmentation

“The answer is user segmentation,” says Michelson. “Every organization has 8 to 10 types of end users that use tech in different ways, and you need to know the end users in your organization.”

Each company will have its own segments, but some common examples include road warriors (employees who are on the road constantly), day extenders (who have corporate office space but are often out of the office or working at home) and office workers (who may need mobility within the facility, but won't be taking work home). One segment that every company has: executives, who often receive a concierge level of service.

Businesses need to segment their employees and create tiered service levels and device diversity.

“I've done over 300 studies in my career, and the last 70 have been oriented toward user segmentation,” Michelson says. “Most companies are doing it, formally or informally, and most are recognizing they need to do it formally.”

User segmentation has five domains:

1. Devices
2. Cost
3. Support
4. Applications
5. Security implications

Road Mapping for the Future

Once you have determined the segments for your end users, you can begin planning for the future by making a road map.

“The road map discussion used to be very simple. Now it's a lot more complex,” says Michelson. “It used to be a notebook replacement policy, replace like with like. Now the technology changes; maybe you replace a notebook with a tablet, or maybe something totally new. It takes a partner and a relationship to think about this stuff, because those are deep conversations.”

Pursel notes that partners who understand product life cycles are absolutely vital to this process, as they have experience with vendors' timelines and can estimate when products will be retired and new products released.

Michelson says a typical road map involves assessing the current state and then looking 18 and 24 months out, then three, four and five years.

“The secret is that you have to go through a process of understanding who the end users are and what they need so you can anticipate what the future is going to look like in those five domains,” he says.

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