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# Picking the Right Enterprise Tablet: Things to Consider

*A J.Gold Associates White Paper*

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## Introduction

The incredible growth of mobile workers has forced many enterprises to consider how to best empower their employees to be connected and productive while in the field. Most have deployed applications to smartphones over the past several years. Organizations are now enabling users with more feature and information rich devices, brought about by the increasing popularity of the tablet format. Often, enterprise tablet deployments result from the demands of an end user community that has grown accustomed to such devices in their personal lives. The task at hand is for enterprises to rationalize the desires of end users with the specific needs and limitations of the organization.

Tablets are playing an increasing role in enterprise mobile deployments for a wide variety of companies and user tasks. But many companies have no formal strategy regarding their selection and deployment. This paper will focus on what enterprises should consider when evaluating and deploying tablets to their mobile workforce.

## Addressing the Needs of the Three Enterprise Constituencies

Any inclusive evaluation of devices and solutions must take into account the three primary constituencies within the organization that will ultimately be affected. These are the End Users, the Line of Business (LOB), and IT. While many of the needs and desires of the three groups are similar, they may diverge on others. Improperly addressing the needs of these constituencies will result in a sub-optimized solution that can negatively impact user productivity, Total Cost of Ownership (TCO), IT functions, and business operations.

*Figure 1: The Three Constituencies Affecting Decision Making*
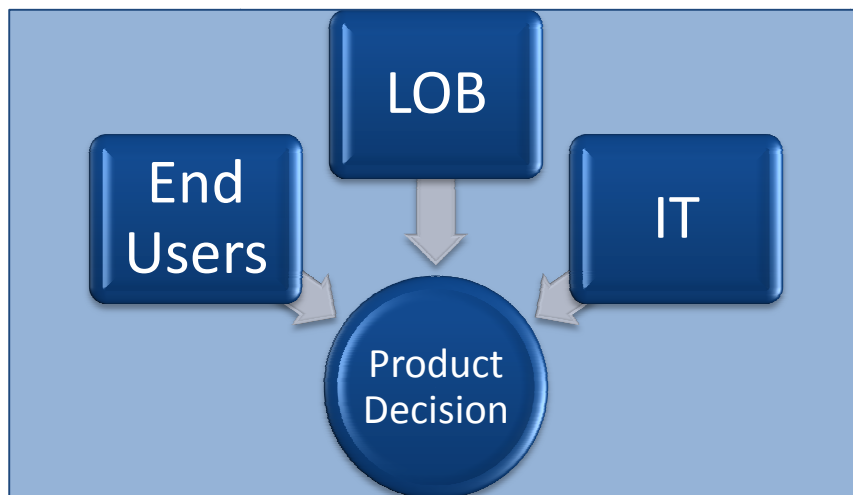
**What End Users Want**:
End users tend to be the most vociferous requestors of tablets. And with many high level executives among those demanding devices, they often get their way. However, not all demands can be rationalized with the overall needs of the organization, such as the best method of conducting its business, meeting the regulatory requirements imposed on the organization, utilizing the resources available, or meeting specialized app requirements.

**LOB Requirements**:
While users have a perception of what their mobile life with a tablet should be, it may not fully equate to the needs of the business. Since LOBs directly fund 65% of corporate app deployments, their preferences are often weighted more heavily than IT in the decision process. LOBs are heavily influenced by end user desires, but they may have unique requirements that users and IT may not fully consider. LOBs must balance end user desires with real world requirements, particularly around apps and existing infrastructure and processes. Not doing so creates issues in procuring, using and supporting any deployment.
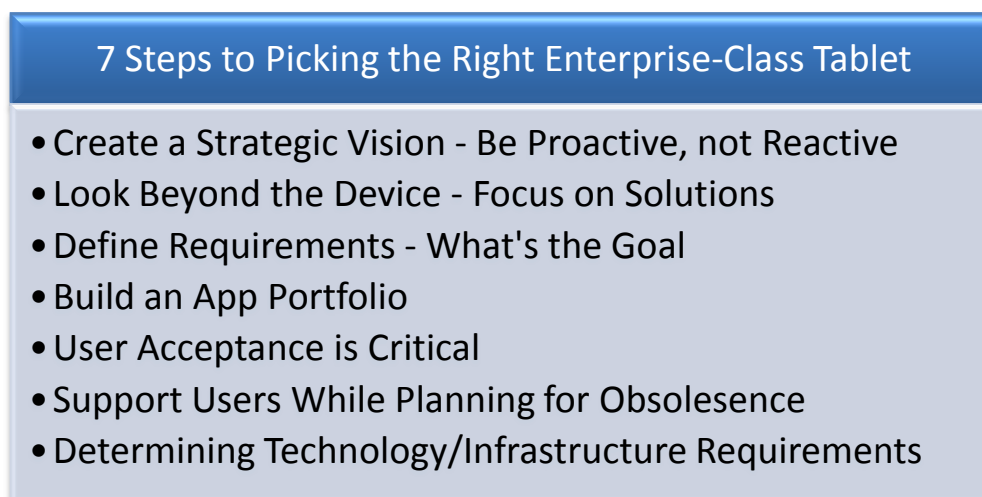
**IT Requirements**:
While IT is generally open to user and LOB concerns, its primary mission is deploying a solution that will most easily integrate into the enterprise infrastructure. Because IT only funds about 35% of corporate solutions it is often unable to impose its will (or its selection). Nevertheless, it does have a major influence/impact on the final decision process. Without IT fully supporting the solution, the deployment will likely experience many ongoing challenges.

# 7 Steps to Picking the Right Enterprise-Class Tablet

There are a number of practical steps that organizations can take to select the best fit tablet to meet their mobile users' needs and corporate requirements. Enterprises should take a number of calculated steps in evaluating and selecting the optimum tablet strategy, such as those highlighted in the table below.

*Figure 2: 7 Steps to Picking the Right Enterprise-Class Tablet*

### 7 Steps to Picking the Right Enterprise-Class Tablet

- Create a Strategic Vision - Be Proactive, not Reactive
- Look Beyond the Device - Focus on Solutions
- Define Requirements - What's the Goal
- Build an App Portfolio
- User Acceptance is Critical
- Support Users While Planning for Obsolesence
- Determining Technology/Infrastructure Requirements

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# Typical Requirements Scenarios

Most companies face scenarios that trade-off user desire for one device type (generally Apple's iPad) to devices most closely aligned with existing enterprise technology and infrastructure deployment (typically Windows). Below we consider three scenarios and evaluate the "out of the box" pros and cons of these two possible platform choices based on commonly deployed enterprise solutions and infrastructure.

### *Figure 3: Work Scenario - Office Users*

| Office Function/Task | iPad | Windows 8 |
|---|---|---|
| • Web/Online App Use | • Partial | • Full |
| • Offline/Native App Use | • Minimal | • Full |
| • Protected Docs | • None | • Full |
| • Macros/VBA | • None | • Full |
| • Outlook Support | • Partial | • Full |
| • Tasks/Scheduling | • Partial | • Full |
| • Complex Doc Creation | • Partial | • Full |
| • Full Excel/PPT Creation | • Partial | • Full |
| • Exchange/Collaboration | • Partial | • Full |

### *Figure 4: Work Scenario – Field Force/Sales*

| Field Force/Sales | iPad | Windows 8 |
|---|---|---|
| • Web Compatibility | • Partial | • Most |
| • Flash Support | • None | • Full |
| • Full Backoffice Apps | • Partial | • Full |
| • Collaboration Tools | • Partial | • Most |
| • Content Presentation | • Most | • Full |
| • Tasks/Scheduling | • Partial | • Full |
| • Security | • Medium | • High |
| • Popularity /User Prefer. | • High | • Medium |
| • Peripherals/Special Dev. | • Medium | • High |

## *Figure 5: IT Scenario - Management/Provisioning*

| Field Force/Sales | iPad | Windows 8 |
|---|---|---|
| • Automated Provisioning | • Partial | • Full |
| • IT Configuration | • Most | • Full |
| • Use Existing Infrastructure | • Partial | • Full |
| • Support Expertise | • Partial | • Full |
| • App Compatibility | • Partial | • Most |
| • Off-the-shelf Apps | • Partial | • Most |
| • Multiple Vendors | • No | • Yes |
| • Multiple Types -Rugged | • No | • Yes |
| • Add-on Mgmt. Tools Needed | • Yes | • No |
| • Security | • Good | • Better |

# Conclusions

Most enterprises are evaluating the use of tablets within their business, often at the request of end users and LOBs. There is good reason to consider the use of tablets in an ever increasing mobile workforce. Yet companies should carefully evaluate which solution is the optimum choice for their specific needs, and not simply implement the devices based on end user or market popularity. There are a number of critical decisions to be made in formulating a tablet strategy. Without doing a proper analysis, it is highly likely that the deployment and utilization of tablets in the enterprise will not achieve their true potential, nor assist the organization in improving overall operations, minimizing costs, or satisfying end user needs.

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## About J.Gold Associates

J.Gold Associates provides insightful, meaningful and actionable analysis of trends and opportunities in the computer and technology industries. J.Gold Associates provides strategic consulting, syndicated research and advisory services, and in-context analysis to help its clients make important technology choices and to enable improved product deployment decisions and go to market strategies.



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