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## Implementing a Bimodal IT Strategy for Mobile App Development in 2016

2016 will see unprecedented demand for mobile apps in the enterprise. Although we did not know it at the time, the launch of the modern smartphone triggered a major transformation in the way people live their lives at home and at work. Customers and employees alike have “mobile moments” throughout their day, where they expect to get what they want via a mobile app at any time and in their immediate context. Whether it is a customer wanting to check the status of an order or an employee checking inventory levels, each “mobile moment” adds a new app requirement to the ever-growing backlog of apps that the enterprise needs to develop.

### Traditional Enterprise Development Platforms and Processes (Mode 1) Are Not Sufficient

The majority of enterprise mobile app platforms today (the so-called MEAPs) were conceived even before the modern app stores were launched. They are great for building very complex applications with large teams of specialized developers and with lengthy development cycles. Most enterprises have several such mobile apps that need to be built.

However, increasingly, most enterprises also need to build a large number of smaller mobile apps that are required by the different business units. These include both employee-facing and customer-facing apps that have shorter time-to-market requirements and smaller budgets. These apps need to be developed and deployed quickly, and are often updated regularly, creating demands that the IT organization is not set up to address.

A new approach is required: bimodal IT.

### Implement a Bimodal IT Strategy for Mobile Apps

Bimodal IT is a strategy many enterprises are adopting to accelerate the pace of innovation in light of the increasing demands from the business. According to Gartner, by 2017, 75 percent of IT organizations will have gone bimodal in some way.

The idea of bimodal IT is to complement the traditional “mode 1” approach with a more rapid mode of development (“mode 2”) that is better suited to support a large number of smaller projects. These projects typically require smaller teams and have more aggressive time-to-market requirements. In “mode 2,” business users and analysts are closer to the development process, and in many cases, also develop with tools that require little or no code. In fact, according to Gartner, by 2018, more than half of all mobile apps will be created by business analysts using codeless tools.

## Avoid BYOT (Bring Your Own Tool)

While bimodal IT is an important trend and is good news for enterprises looking to accelerate the pace of mobile development, there are potential pitfalls that must be avoided. There is a risk that users from different parts of the business will download their own tools and develop their own apps without IT involvement. This “rogue IT” approach can result in risks to data security and other corporate governance issues and should be avoided. In addition, this fragmented approach results in a lack of consistency across the organization, with assets and skills that can’t be leveraged across the business. Instead, enterprises should deploy a centralized platform to support all developers in the enterprise, with consistent tools and with IT oversight.

## Platform Recommendations to Enable Bimodal IT

To implement a successful bimodal IT strategy, enterprises require a mobile platform that adequately supports the needs of business users while ensuring the role of IT as a facilitator. The objective is to enable IT to do the heavy lifting, such as back-end integration and coding of reusable application components, while enabling business users to rapidly create the mobile apps they require.

To support a bimodal IT strategy for your mobile development, deploy a mobile platform that:

- Is cloud-based (private or public cloud), managed by IT, but available to business users who want to develop apps for their business. In this way, business users can participate in the development, while IT can support them and ensure compliance with IT policies. Deploy the platform in a private cloud or leverage the public cloud, depending on your needs.
- Offers a rapid, visual development environment to speed up the development process but also offers a full coding IDE to enable the most flexibility. This approach enables a development continuum between IT and business users that is required when implementing a bimodal IT strategy. Business users can create complete applications with the visual interface, while IT developers can further customize them or create more complex ones with the coding interface.
- Offers a browser-based development environment so business users can develop from anywhere without having to download and maintain unfamiliar tools. With a Web-based platform, IT can be sure that the infra- structure is always up to date for the business users.
- Offers integrated mobile back-end services (MBaaS) to enable IT to offer business users the back-end capabilities they will need when creating applications. This includes user management, push notifications, server- side logic, data management and mobile integration middleware to seamlessly connect to existing enterprise data sources.
- Offers the ability to integrate the existing development processes in the enterprise, such as continuous integration and workflow systems.

2016 looks to be a year of extensive mobile adoption in the enterprise. Customers and employees will demand mobile apps for every “mobile moment,” increasing the need to accelerate mobile application development.

To deliver on the needs of the business, enterprises should deploy a modern mobile platform that enables the implementation of a bimodal IT strategy that supports business user participation in the development process with the full support and oversight of the IT organization. Such a strategy will also ensure that the IT organization can support the needs of the business to innovate rapidly while avoiding the “rogue IT” pitfalls that can result from a BYOT approach.

*About the Author: Fima Katz is the President and CEO of Appery, LLC, Makers of [Appery.io](http://Appery.io). Fima has over 20 years of experience in the information technology industry, including leadership roles at Wells Fargo Bank and Bank of America. He is a serial entrepreneur with three other successful company exits. Mr. Katz is a recognized authority and speaker on open source, JAVA, XML and DOA technologies and co-authored *The Essential Guide to Object Monitors* (Wiley, 1999).*