Making Apple Products Enterprise Ready:
What Every Business Should Know

The Apple Paradigm

For decades, there has been some tension between Apple products and enterprise computing. IT departments have eschewed the Mac, only grudgingly allowing graphic artists and video editors to connect them to corporate resources. But much has changed since the introduction of the Mac: In 1984 IBM dominated the personal computer marketplace and the Mac held less than 5 percent of the computer marketplace. Now, IBM, the company that created the PC, is no longer in the PC business, leaving HP, Lenovo and Dell as major US players. Meanwhile Apple has thrived, and now has the largest market capitalization in the world and over $200 billion in cash.

What has driven the success of Apple and the Mac? Since the early days of the Mac, Apple put a strong focus on the education marketplace, and it was not uncommon to see many schools with Macs or MacBooks in the classroom – including on the teacher's desk. This dominance in early education has paid off with huge dividends – namely a cadre of former students raised on Macs who now demand them in the workplace. Further, in recent years Apple adopted Intel processors for its Mac line, easing the ability for these machines to run both Mac OS and Windows software, allaying some fears of incompatibility. As for mobile devices, there would be little argument that Apple dominates in both market share and industry leadership, having redefined the mobile user experience with iPhone and iPad. These devices, driven by executive and mobile user demand, rapidly went from disruptive technology that IT did not readily embrace to corporate standard in just a few years.

The Trouble in Apple Paradise

Apple products, as marketed, really aren't enterprise-ready. First, consider the cost. Macs are expensive, and the cost to acquire a Windows-based PC with the same hardware specifications is usually at least 30% less than an equivalent Mac. Next, there is the issue of application compatibility, especially legacy applications that require the use of additional virtualization software to support business-critical code written for Windows machines. Then, and most importantly, there is a major disconnect between standard Apple service and support, and what the enterprise community needs. The Genius Bar isn't corporate IT, and that can make repairing a damaged device a complicated prospect. Corporate Mac users require a rapid return to service for broken Macs that house corporate data, and leaving a Mac containing sensitive data behind for repair could be a violation of regulations such as HIPAA, PCI, Sarbanes-Oxley or a host of other industry or business-specific rules.

Another major issue for many IT departments is the lack of visibility or continuity for Apple products. Apple doesn't regularly provide product roadmaps, but business IT needs secure, locked-down "images" – combinations of specific, tested OS, utilities, and applications – that will work with the next version of MacBook or iMac. This spawns a number of "anti-IT" issues including:

- Inventory management for products with no roadmap, including trying to determine how many spare machines to keep and what to do when new products are released

- Image maintenance and creation of different images for each hardware/OS combination

- Secure repair of broken hardware so as not to violate governance or regulatory issues

WEI IDG
STRATEGIC MARKETING SERVICES

Lifecycle management including disposal of retired devices that contain enterprise data

Application compatibility. Very often application developers do not release their updated applications to support new OS X versions until after the new OS X is released, which is usually alongside a new Mac hardware release. This puts enterprise customers in the position of not having a secure OS & application tested to support the new OS and hardware - but also no hardware to support their fleet, because Apple stops shipment of old models at the time of announcement.

Since Apple's Mac and iOS devices evolved on the periphery of IT, they largely remained outside the domain of traditional IT support or management. What then does IT need when bringing Apple products into the fold?

Creating an Enterprise-Ready Apple Ecosystem

Enterprises and IT value repeatability and standardization. Reliance on these factors are the reason they can create accurate projections and solve most problems quickly, but these factors can also lead to technology inertia. Integrating the newest devices into the network requires new knowledge and protocols, and it requires them immediately. And unfortunately, computers and devices that require exception handling for routine lifecycle management can reduce both IT and business decision makers' productivity by eating into their time and budgets.

To address the Apple paradigm in-house, an enterprise would require specialized MDM procedures to address security protocols, lifecycle management, and warranty programs for Apple devices. A company that wishes to empower their employees to use the newest iPad, iPhone, or MacBook on the company network would need to reevaluate their MDM strategy each year when the latest specs and models are introduced. From the user perspective, there will often be a delay from the release of new models to when they can be activated on the network, due to the delay between Apple releases and ISV support for those new products.

The sometimes-slow nature of integrating new technology into a corporate environment combined with the quick turnover of mobile devices and Apple's nature to not provide a product roadmap means many companies just aren't suited to effectively, securely make these devices a part of the business. Often, enterprises turn to a trusted third party to handle these device and computer management issues, freeing them up for more business-critical tasks while ensuring every user – and their devices – are safe, secure, productive and enterprise-ready.

Turnkey Apple Solutions

A collaborative IT partner can help your company meet these needs, but choosing the right IT partner is critical as Apple reseller partners are limited. It is important to choose a partner capable of looking at the big picture that can deliver not just productive, secure products, but also ensure your network will be ready to support the two, three, or more devices that every employee will soon bring into the mix. In essence, look for an IT partner with programs designed to make Apple integration simple and straightforward and with services designed for enterprise customers.

Working with WEI, companies benefit from additional value unlike anything else in the industry.

Support and Repair - Skip the genius bar and shift the support burden to a team that provides a secure alternative for break/fix solutions. WEI's certified warranty repair programs solve immediate problems and meet business deadlines, and thanks to a unique break/fix strategy that reduces helpdesk inquiries, users are up and running quickly and problems are solved in hours not weeks.

Customization and Deployment - Eliminate inventory and roadmap worries with imaged, domain-integrated bundled and kitted systems that meet specific users' needs. Apple's deployment best practices are instilled in WEI's deployment process and can provide your company with a second-to-none end user experience and increased user productivity.

Security - Ensure compliance with industry regulations and corporate security guidelines for sensitive data. Work with WEI to ensure your enterprise mobility management solution leverages the Apple device enrollment program and gain support for remote device tracking and monitoring capable of remotely wiping a device when needed.

WEI's knowledge of Apple services, support, and integration positions your company to successfully deploy Apple in the enterprise. Contact WEI today and learn how to get started.

WEI

To find out how to get started on your path to Apple integration, visit **www.wei.com.**